the weekly Standard

JUNE 14, 2004

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AMONG THE BUSH-BASHERS
MATTHEW CONTINETTI

Radio Silence

How NPR purged classical music from its airwaves

by Andrew Ferguson

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Contents

June 14, 2004 • Volume 9, Number 38

2 Scrapbook..... *Zbig, Dana Milbank, and more.*

4 Casual..... *Joseph Epstein, moviegoer.*

6 Correspondence..... *Michael Moore, Tories, etc.*

9 Editorial..... *Yes, Bush Will Win*

Articles

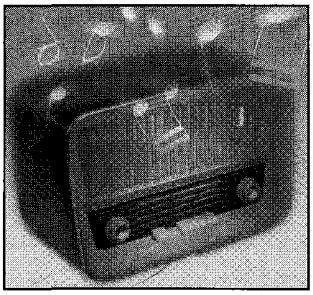
10 Progressive Summer Camp *Among the anti-Bush organizers*..... BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

12 About That Budget Deficit *It's shrinking*..... BY FRED BARNES

13 Political Porn *A know-nothing teach-in on Abu Ghraib*..... BY TIM MARCHMAN

14 Stone Walls and Wal-Mart *Preserving Vermont*..... BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

16 A Big Fat Jury Verdict *Trial lawyers aren't the only problem with the tort system*..... BY WILLIAM TUCKER



Cover: Masterfile / Robert G. Young

Features

18 Radio Silence

How NPR purged classical music from its airwaves..... BY ANDREW FERGUSON

27 Breeding Insecurity

Israel begins to confront its demographic problem..... BY PETER BERKOWITZ

Books & Arts

31 Ulysses and Us *James Joyce's Bloomsday reaches its centennial*..... BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

33 The Spirit in Letters *George Weigel writes epistles to a young Catholic*..... BY EVE TUSHNET

34 Jail House Blues *America's immigration prisons are a scandal—but bad books won't fix them*..... BY ELI LEHRER

36 The Butler Did It *Why murder belongs in the stately homes of England*..... BY S.T. KARNICK

39 THE STANDARD READER ..... *John Graves's* Myself and Strangers.

40 Not a Parody..... *Profile of a stripper.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
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the weekly Standard

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Profiles in Chutzpah

Add Zbigniew Brzezinski to the list of politically prominent people who've lately succumbed to *algoreitis simplex*, the mysterious brain infection so named for its most obvious manifestation: the eagerness of its victims to indulge in ludicrously exaggerated condemnations of George W. Bush's war on terrorism. Brzezinski, poor thing, has become symptomatic in the pages of the current *New Republic*, where our patient presents as a former Carter administration national security adviser who is nevertheless unembarrassed to cite a later administration for unprecedented foreign policy failure.

Under Bush, Brzezinski writes, "America's credibility has been tarnished among its traditional friends, its prestige has plummeted worldwide, and global hostility to the United States has reached a historical high." So far as Dr. SCRAPBOOK is concerned, that one sentence alone ought to seal the diagnosis: The man is demented; he can't remember his own career.

Preliminary investigation suggests that Brzezinski himself has experienced a previous, significant episode of cataclysmic foreign policy incompetence involving: (1) the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; (2) Jimmy Carter's subsequent admission that he'd been surprised by how *mean* Russian communism turned out to be; (3) the fall of the shah and the Iranian hostage crisis; (4) a humiliating botched effort to rescue those hostages; (5) the Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua; (6) the Sandinista regime's aggressive attempt to export communism elsewhere throughout Latin America, unchecked by the United States; and (7) a great many additional, similar, and infamous fiascos we don't have room to list.

Our prescription: As a necessary exercise in humility, Brzezinski should have another look at one of those "Weekly Reports" he used to send over to President Carter from the NSC—specifically, Weekly Report #87, on "Islamic Fundamentalism," from February 2, 1979. That's the one where Brzezinski advised the president that "Islamic revivalist movements are not sweeping the Middle East and are not likely to be the wave of the future." Oops. Brzezinski also might want to have a look at the note Carter scrawled for him in the margin of Weekly Report #84, on "Iran—The Conventional Wisdom," from January 12, 1979. "Zbig," Carter scribbled: "After we make joint decisions, deploring them for the record doesn't help me."

Patient's tendency to extreme and hypocritical self-aggrandizement appears to be chronic. ♦

Post's Milbank Shows Unprecedented Bias, Scholars Say

Remember that story *Washington Post* White House correspondent Dana Milbank wrote (with colleague Mike Allen) about how President Bush took a vacation during the month immediately preceding 9/11? Bush had already been given that now-famous memo elucidating an indeterminate al Qaeda threat, see, *but still he went golfing*! Overreaching on this pseudo-ironic juxtaposition, Milbank also overreached on the facts of the memo in another article (written with Walter Pincus) in the same edition. And the *Post* was then forced to run a 900-word ombudsman report addressing readers' complaints about errors and "political spin" in Milbank's articles.

Will they now run another correction after last week's similarly egregious overreach? Probably not, so here's ours.

At issue is Milbank's latest piece of attitude-heavy anti-Bush analysis, the mood of which is instantly detectable from the headline: "From Bush, Unprecedented Negativity; Scholars Say Campaign is Making History With Often-Misleading Attacks." And what are those misleading attacks, exactly? In the body of the article Milbank (this time sharing a byline with Jim VandeHei) purports to identify four such Bush campaign claims: (1) that Kerry has, in Dick Cheney's words, "questioned whether the war on terror is really a war at all"; (2) that Kerry would "repeal most of the Bush tax cuts"; (3) that Kerry would scrap anti-terrorist wiretaps authorized by the USA Patriot Act; and (4) that "Kerry wants to raise the gasoline tax by 50 cents." All of these claims, Milbank and VandeHei report, are false.

No they aren't. (1) On more than one occasion, Kerry has described the war on terror as "fundamentally an intelligence operation and law enforcement operation and a diplomatic operation." (2) Kerry insists he intends to repeal only those Bush tax cuts that benefit people with annual incomes over $200,000, but Milbank himself has commented on how the rich "heavily" benefit from Bush's tax cuts. (3) Kerry recently told supporters in Rhode Island that "there are several provisions in the Patriot Act—the sneak-and-peek searches, the roving wiretap, the library pieces, a couple of those—that ought to be changed," and "if I'm president, I will not allow [the Patriot Act] to go through with those provisions." (4) Milbank and VandeHei say Bush is claiming that "Kerry wants to raise the gasoline tax by 50 cents." But the relevant Bush ad says merely that

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Kerry *once supported* a 50-cent tax on gasoline, a vote Kerry has publicly acknowledged. Milbank and VandeHei report that the ad "implies that the proposal is current," but they're wrong; the ad "implies" nothing at all. According to its script, Kerry "supported a 50-cent increase in gas prices," *period*. Note the past tense.

Note, too, how feebly the Milbank-VandeHei report manages to support the promise of its headline. Do "scholars say," in fact, that George W. Bush is running a reelection campaign of "unprecedented negativity" and "misleading attacks"? Maybe, but Milbank and VandeHei haven't found them. One political scientist they interview says he "anticipates" that "it's going to be the most negative campaign ever." Note the future tense. Another political scientist, however, says that Bush's "distortions" are no worse than those presidential candidates have been making since "the beginning of time." ♦

Air America Weekly Wrap-Up

On June 3, the *Sacramento Bee* reported on Al Franken's public flirtation with a 2008 U.S. Senate run in Minnesota, where he was born and raised—but where he has not lived for decades. Franken admitted that he can name only one member of Minnesota's congressional delegation. Franken further revealed, apparently without realizing it, that the national Democratic party may not be too keen on this Franken-for-Senate business. "I just talked to Hillary Clinton," the *Bee* quoted Franken gushing, "and she said, 'You know, if this radio show takes off, you could do more good doing the radio show than being a senator.'" Amen to that.

Meanwhile, Billy Kimball, executive producer of Air America's *The O'Franken Factor*, has called THE SCRAPBOOK's voicemail to goodnaturedly complain about a factual detail in our item last week on his recent nuptials. It's his wife's father who's a *New Yorker* cartoonist, not his own, as we mistakenly wrote. Then, too, Mr. Kimball questions why THE SCRAPBOOK originally extended him its "mostly sincere" wedding congratulations—rather than entirely sincere ones, as is the usual custom. We therefore offer him our mostly sincere apologies for both errors. ♦

Jayson Blair, Explained

Howell Raines, guest columnizing in London's *Guardian*, June 2: "As America's first war-hero candidate since John F. Kennedy, [Kerry] ought to be leading the national discussion on what went wrong in Iraq."

And as a man who pretends to some sophistication about his nation's politics, Howell Raines ought to be aware that George McGovern flew daylight bombing missions over Nazi-occupied Europe, that the first President Bush was shot down over the Pacific by the Japanese, and that John McCain spent several noteworthy years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. ♦

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Casual

It's Only a Movie

Last Saturday I saw a movie so inept, so stupid, so generally and particularly wrong that I felt justified in not having paid much attention to movies over the past decade or so, but it also gave the peculiar kind of pleasure that only a genuinely bad movie can sometimes give. The movie is called *Mona Lisa Smile*, and is about Wellesley College in the early 1950s, and stars Julia Roberts. Dorothy Parker is supposed to have said of Katharine Hepburn—wrongly, it turns out—that, as an actress, "she ran the whole gamut of emotions from A to B." Roberts takes things all the way to C. She does Happy, Angry, and Sad, but nothing beyond or between. *Mona Lisa Smile*, in its unsubtlety, is perfect for her.

For a bad movie to give pleasure it must be dead-on wrong in an impressive way. *The Best of Everything* (1959), which was about three beautiful young women who come to New York to work in publishing, was such a movie. A detail I recall, nearly 45 years later, is Hope Lange, a lowly secretary at a publishing firm, reading unsolicited manuscripts, putting a piece of paper in her manual typewriter and tapping out, "This novel shows careful delineation of character." Bang, next thing you know she has become senior editor, a job she has taken away from the menacing Joan Crawford.

Mona Lisa Smile is about the pressures of conformity at Wellesley in the 1950s. I found this premise highly amusing, since some of the most impressively nonconformist women I know went to Wellesley during those years: the classicist Mary Lefkowitz, the writer Diane Ravitch, the columnist Judith Martin (also known as "Miss Manners"). Well-made art makes the unpredictable seem plausible. In this flick everything is predictable and implausible. It also has the added charm of ahistoricism, such as using "rip-off" more than a decade before its time and referring to an academic department chairman (in 1953) as "chair." Discovering historical faux pas in movies is a fine indoor sport. "Hey, Caesar, check it out."

I watched *Mona Lisa Smile* on DVD. I watch most movies on VCR or DVD these days, even though a 14-

Darren Gygi

theater cineplex is three blocks from my apartment. I feel no urgency about seeing any movie, and make it a special point to neglect the big movies that are being most talked about at the moment. I waited three years before seeing *Schindler's List*; I plan never to see *Titanic*; and a horde of wild Jews, prodded on by Roman soldiers, couldn't drag me to *The Passion of the Christ*.

I retain a mild addiction to movie-watching, one getting milder all the time. At chez Epstein we try to find a watchable flick every Saturday night, which we view with popcorn, Granny Smith apples, and a beer. I say "watchable" as opposed, say, to great or to nauseating. My expectations have been greatly lowered. I don't hold out much hope for movies, though I am still pleased, as happens every so often, to be surprised at an artful flick.

When I am surprised, it is by small movies. I recently saw a swell Canadian movie called *Owning Mahowny*, about a midlevel bank manager with a high-level gambling problem. It didn't change my life, you understand, but neither did I feel I had been taken when it was over. I find myself watching more and more foreign films, including lots of Chinese ones, and older French movies that I missed the first time around. I've even come to like subtitles, which help concentrate the wandering mind.

The bigger the budget, bank on it, the worse the movie. The more talked-about the movie, the more disappointing it turns out to be. In the late '60s and through the 1970s, when Pauline Kael was the colossus astride the *New Yorker*, movies became topic number one. Wherever you went, people wanted to know if you saw this or that movie, or read this or the other critic on it. Not to have an opinion on the latest flick felt like leaving home without some necessary piece of clothing.

I suspect it's better that movies are no longer at the center of conversation or of the culture. (Not that I know what has replaced them.) Movies are merely movies, and no great fuss ought to be made over them. The people who make movies are generally not even close to intelligent. When movies are really excellent, such as *Casablanca*, they are so almost by accident.

When my granddaughter was four years old, she sat on my lap and we watched *The Fox and the Hound*. During a scene in which the fox is being gently ejected from the home of an old woman who had cared for him when he was injured, I exclaimed, too insistently perhaps, about the sadness of what we were watching. "Grandpa," my granddaughter said, without turning her head, "it's only a movie." The kid got it dead-on right.

Joseph Epstein

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A NATION AT WAR.

After freeing Afghanistan from the grip of the Taliban in the fall of 2001, President Bush aimed the war on terror at another threatening regime—the brutal, murderous dictatorship of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. For its scale, speed, and low casualty count, the invasion of Iraq by the United States and 48 other countries numbers among history's spectacular military successes. Coalition troops rolled across Iraq's southern border on March 20, 2003, and three weeks later, Baghdad, the capital, had fallen, with organized resistance reduced to a few scattered pockets. Political prisoners were released, statues and portraits fell, and in December, Hussein himself was dragged out of a squalid, remote hole in the ground, to the cheers and relief of millions of Iraqis.

With the help of the coalition, Iraq is building new political and private-sector institutions as well as its tattered infrastructure. Much of the progress is due to billions of dollars from the United States—the greatest financial commitment of its kind since the Marshall Plan.

On a smaller scale, however, the war on terror continues daily in Iraq, as foreign al Qaeda militants and hardliners of the former regime attack troops, foreign workers, and Iraqi citizens. As President Bush has said, "Now is the time, and Iraq is the place, in which the enemies of the civilized world are testing the will of the civilized world. We must not waver. . . . Our coalition has the means and the will to prevail. We serve the cause of liberty, and that is, always and everywhere, a cause worth serving."

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WESTPORT, CONN.

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Less is Moore

On January 18, 1988, I published an interview with Fred Barnes in a publication which I edited at the time, called *Moore's Weekly* ("Michael Moore and Me," May 31). I interviewed Barnes about his comments on the January 2, 1988 edition of *The McLaughlin Group*, in which he expressed support for then Secretary of Education William Bennett's theory that high school curriculum should be dominated by courses in classic Greek and English literature.

I asked Fred to share his views about two well-known classics, *The Iliad* by Homer and Dante's *Inferno*. Barnes reiterated to me that these books are "what everybody oughta learn. They're easy to read."

In the course of my interview, I decided to give him a pop quiz. Fred didn't do so well. (For your reference: *Moore's Weekly* pages one and two, and the full column on Barnes, can be found at: *www.michaelmoore.com*.)

The conservative *Washington Times* liked my interview with Barnes and the paper wrote about it in their January 22, 1988, "Inside the Beltway" column. The *Washington Times* is the kind of paper Fred Barnes probably reads before he gets out of bed in the morning. You may read the article at *www.michael moore.com* as well.

Fred Barnes did not complain when I published the interview with him 16 years ago. He did not complain when the *Washington Times* article appeared in 1988. It was not until April 2002, when *Stupid White Men* came out, which recounted the interview, that Fox's Brit Hume reported, "Fred Barnes told me today that he never talked to Moore in his life, and that he has read both [*The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*], cover to cover in college."

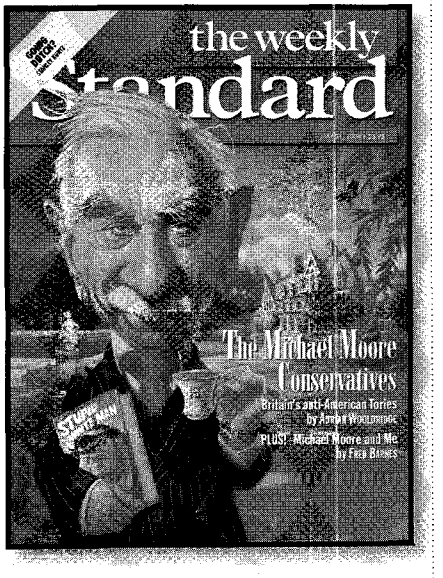
Now that my movie *Fahrenheit 9/11* is receiving significant attention, Fred Barnes has seen fit to publicly deny the whole thing again, even though I last referenced the interview in a book published two years ago.

Now, the cynically inclined might say that Barnes, who has steadily faded into obscurity as an editor of a small circulation weekly, is trying to take advantage of the moment. I prefer to give Barnes the benefit of the doubt and credit his belated complaint to a fading memory. We all forget things sometimes, Fred. No hard feelings here.

Michael Moore
New York, NY

Torytelling

When I read Adrian Wooldridge's article about Britain's anti-American conservatives ("The Michael Moore Conservatives," May 31), I recalled reading how British generals constantly questioned American abilities and willingness to fight in World War II.



I also recalled how many British conservatives in the 19th century toured America, professing amazement at what boobs we were. I am sure these Tories feel that the United States' status as the world's sole superpower is just dumb luck.

Tim Erlander
Richfield, MN

Butterball

In "On the Afghan Front" (May 31), Christian Lowe states: "If America is to win the war on terrorism . . . the 'guns and butter' strategy must be maintained." I submit that, rather than win, the guns and butter strategy will only prolong the war.

In order to win, we must kill the terrorists. If that isn't possible, we need to disable them. And the way to do this is to withhold all financial support, including American trade, from those countries who support terrorists until such time as those countries eradicate the threat themselves.

Larry Radtke
Jackson, WY

No Pain, No McCain

In "The Kerry-McCain Fantasy" (May 31), Noemie Emery marshals a comprehensive array of reasons why a John Kerry-John McCain ticket would be a mismatch that the Democrats would quickly come to rue. But her whole edifice tips over if Kerry says to his fellow senator: "John, I need you as my running mate. Please understand, I am not asking you to switch parties, nor would I expect or want you to do so."

Under those circumstances, the team of Kerry, the Democrat from Massachusetts, and McCain, the Republican from Arizona, could be hyped less as a "ticket" than as a "coalition," something akin to the war cabinet David Lloyd George formed in December 1916, when Great Britain's fortunes were at their lowest ebb. Link that world emergency to the current one, and the Democrats would be positioned to make a compelling case for unseating President Bush.

Robert G. Wyeth
Homestead, PA

Unsafe at Any Speed

In "Buckle Up . . . Or Else" (May 31), Andrew Ferguson writes of the lack of accountability of auto safety regulation (little or no correlation between seat-belt use and total traffic fatalities) and its self-contradictory nature (mandatory seat-belt use to protect against airbag injuries). Empirical studies by economists further weaken the case for safety regulations by documenting other "moral hazard" tendencies—namely, the likelihood that the regulations will generate unintended additional injuries by encouraging riskier driving patterns.

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In 1975, Sam Peltzman provided the first evidence that, by reducing injuries, mandated auto safety features were promoting more "intensive" (less safe) driving. Although auto occupants suffered fewer fatalities, pedestrian deaths increased during the study period so as to leave total traffic fatalities attributed to the regulations roughly unchanged. Patrick McCarthy in 1986 found that the higher cost of the safety features led buyers to shift to cheaper, smaller cars, whose occupants, even with the safety features, were more vulnerable to injury. This perverse effect was overcome to some degree by the tendency of drivers of small cars to drive less intensively and thus experience a lower accident rate than drivers of the larger vehicles.

The principle implied by these studies is that the law of unintended consequences may trump the best of regulatory intentions. As Gordon Tullock famously remarked, the only truly effective auto safety regulation would be one that requires a dagger to be mounted on the steering column aimed at the driver's heart. Alternatively, a wag once suggested the airbags should be mounted on the exterior of cars—to protect pedestrians.

GEORGE HORWICH
West Lafayette, IN

CURIOUS GEORGE SOROS

IN HIS MISINFORMED ANALYSIS of recent events in Georgia ("Georgia on His Mind," May 24), Richard W. Carlson may not realize that he is attacking the Bush administration when he criticizes George Soros. The United States, along with other donors such as Soros's Open Society Georgia Foundation, endorsed the efforts of nongovernmental organizations to ensure that elections were free and fair in that strategic country.

The Open Society Georgia Foundation, part of a network of foundations created by Soros to promote open society—public access to information and the strengthening of human and civil rights—in 2003 spent some $550,000 on its election support program, which is a bit less than the $42 million Carlson alleges.

In all, Soros's philanthropic network spent $3.5 million in Georgia in 2003 on education, anticorruption initiatives, judicial and legal reform, arts and culture, Internet access, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Election spending did not include, as Carlson claims, money for roses or buses to demonstrations. It did, however, cover get-out-the-vote events, domestic Election Day monitors and, most important, exit polling. The polling played a crucial role. It exposed the extent to which President Eduard Shevardnadze tried to steal the elections. In protest, Georgia's citizens took to the streets. It was popular indignation and the realization that citizens could control their own destiny that brought down Shevardnadze.

They elected President Mikhail Saakashvili by a landslide. Along with the new prime minister, Zurab Zhvania, Saakashvili had worked with the Foundation in anticorruption efforts, and, significantly, had fallen out with Shevardnadze over his failure to fight against corruption.

Carlson seems unaware that the money spent in Georgia is just a tiny fraction of the hundreds of millions of dollars that Soros has given since 1984 to help the former Soviet empire make the transition from communism. He is widely acknowledged to have done more than any other individual to bolster democracy in a region emerging from darkness.

The Foundation in Georgia will work with the government to push through badly needed reforms, but it will also keep an eye on it to make certain the government is accountable to its citizens.

LAURA SILBER
Open Society Institute
New York, NY

RICHARD W. CARLSON RESPONDS: Saying that I both criticized George Soros, and by extension attacked George Bush, is a failed contrivance, and not in the least cunning. Nice try, Madam, but no cigar. Of course the U.S. administration supports Mikhail Saakashvili. Why shouldn't they? He ousted the corrupt and violent Eduard Shevardnadze, the West's Favorite Friend until misfortune punched him in the nose. And we have the Caspian Sea oil pipeline to worry about. But if George Soros is so committed to "human and civil rights," then he and Laura Silber should be keeping a close eye on Shevardnadze's replacement, Saakashvili, not bouncing up and down hysterically at the first whiff of criticism. It was less than a year ago that Shevardnadze was receiving the same NGO and media suck-up treatment now lavished on Saakashvili. (My, that might even have been happening at a time when George Soros was comparing George Bush to Adolf Hitler.) The $42 million that Soros allegedly spent on the election run-up was a figure widely reported in the Georgian media and told to me personally by a member of the Georgia parliament. If Laura Silber says the money for the "spontaneous demonstrators" and all those clutches of unseasonal roses didn't come from Soros, so be it. Maybe it was funneled into Georgia by MoveOn.org.

The serious worry in this for Georgia is the long-term effects of concentrated power in the hands of one messianic unelected fellow whose billions, which after all define him, flowed from unseemly financial-market betting. Perhaps George Soros simply wants democracy and transparency and clean government for Georgia, whose oil pipeline revenues may generate up to $800 million a year, surpassing its construction costs in three or four years. He says he does. Someday we will know the answer.

ERRATA

IN ADRIAN WOOLDRIDGE'S "The Michael Moore Conservatives" (May 31), the Tory leader Malcolm Rifkind is mistakenly identified as Michael Rifkind.

• • •

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the weekly Standard

Yes, Bush Will Win

George W. Bush is going to win. He'll win the war, and he'll win the election. How do I know this? Needless to say, I don't. And, God knows, the Bush administration often seems to be snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. But I've spent much of the last two weeks abroad, which (perhaps) gives you perspective. And that perspective leads me to think Bush will win.

It's not just that in Europe every leftist anti-American creep and every world-weary phony sophisticate wants and expects Bush to lose in November, and America to lose in Iraq. Surely the American people won't give them the satisfaction of having their wishes granted. Nor would the American people want to devastate the few beleaguered pro-American, pro-war-on-terror, anti-appeasement politicians and intellectuals in Europe.

Okay, that's wishful thinking. But there are grounds for hope. We are actually winning the war in Iraq, and the war on terror. We're not winning either as thoroughly or as comprehensively as we should be. Still, it is a fact that one year after the invasion of Iraq, Saddam and his regime are gone; a decent interim Iraqi government is taking over; we and the Iraqis have not suffered a devastating level of casualties; the security situation, though inexcusably bad, looks as if it may finally be improving; Moktada al-Sadr seems to have been marginalized, and the Shia center is holding; there is nothing approaching civil war. The failure to follow through in Falluja remains a problem, but it needn't become a precedent. And last week, the new prime minister, Iyad Alawi, thanked the United States for liberating Iraq, said that it would be "a major disaster" for U.S. forces to leave, and privately said that to win the war you have to kill the enemy. So it's unlikely he will constrain our troops excessively.

Meanwhile, most of the pathologies in the region that predate March 2003 still exist, but they're not worse, and some are better. There has been real progress, in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, against terror; the A.Q. Khan nuclear proliferation network has been exposed; there has been progress on the Israeli-Palestinian front; there are signs of liberal ferment in the Arab world.

One sensible but conventional journalist wrote last week, "Can anybody seriously argue that, knowing what they now know about the unfolding of events in Iraq, the allies would willingly do the same thing again?" I think the answer is yes. And I think the American people will answer yes in November. They'll answer yes because they aren't really going to believe that we would have been better off to have left Saddam in power in Iraq. And the American people aren't really going to believe that more focus on first responders, and less on removing brutal dictators and changing the Middle East, is the right way to fight the war on terror.

Senator Kerry, it has to be said, is running a sensible and cautious campaign. But that makes him almost unique among Bush's opponents. Kerry is surrounded by loony supporters whose extremism will hurt him—or would hurt him, if the Bush campaign were more nimble. Poor Bob Dole had to pay in spades in 1996 for every incautious statement of Newt Gingrich. The first President Bush suffered for Pat Buchanan's convention speech. Left to their own devices, the media aren't going to make Kerry pay for anything, to be sure. But they would at least have to pay attention if the Bush campaign made a bigger deal out of the mind-boggling slanders by Kerry's fellow Massachusetts senator, Ted Kennedy, his predecessor as his party's nominee, Al Gore, and the largest bankroller of the anti-Bush forces, financier George Soros.

Kennedy last month hyperventilated about Abu Ghraib: "We now learn that Saddam's torture chambers reopened under new management: U.S. management." Kerry, asked about that statement the next day, said, "He's my friend and I respect him, but I don't agree with the framing of that." The *framing*? But that was that—no follow-up from the Bush campaign to wrap that comment by his buddy Ted around Kerry's neck and to cause him days of discomfort.

A couple of weeks ago, Al Gore gave a speech in which he referred to "Bush's Gulag." Where were the Bush campaign surrogates, asking Kerry whether he thought that formulation was appropriate? And then last week, George Soros said that "the way President Bush conducted the war on terror converted us from victims to perpetrators." The Republican party chairman called this remark "troubling"—but made no effort to put Kerry on the spot. (Instead, the Bush campaign made a silly attack on Kerry for skipping a 95-0 Senate vote to authorize $25 billion for Iraq.)

It's frustrating. It's a ham-handed campaign. But Bush will win anyway. Then he can shake up his administration and really make progress toward winning the global war in which we're engaged.

—*William Kristol*

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Progressive Summer Camp

Among the anti-Bush organizers.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

BENJAMIN CLARY—pale, spindly, and 18 years old—is on message. It's late in the afternoon on Thursday, June 3, in a dim corner of the Wardman Park Marriott hotel, a few miles from downtown Washington, D.C., and Ben is working the Wellstone Action booth at the Take Back America conference, an annual gathering of progressive activists. But you know, Ben says, he should be back home.

Back home is Minnesota's Twin Cities, where Ben will graduate from his high school, St. Paul's Academy, in a few days, and really, he says, he ought to be worried about prom, diplomas, senior night, and then college. But more important is an educational experience he had awhile back. More important is the time he spent at Camp Wellstone.

There are many Camp Wellstones. The one Ben went to was in Minnesota, home of the camp's namesake, the late liberal Democratic senator Paul Wellstone, who died in a plane crash in October 2002. Shortly afterwards, his two sons founded Wellstone Action, a political advocacy group that runs training camps for candidates, campaign staff, and activists. "We just did one in West Virginia," Ben says, eyes beaming. "We have another in D.C. next week, then California, then Massachusetts." Ben did the campaign staff track. I ask him if he had fun at camp. "It was great," he says, without hesitation. "We need to continue the senator's work."

Ben is busy. This is the largest Camp Wellstone of them all. There are over 2,000 Democrats, Greens, activists, progressives, liberals, moderates, peaceniks, politicians, centrists, senators, and journalists swarming the Marriott, which sits like a fortress atop a hill overlooking the capital's Rock Creek Park. They came here to discuss how to defeat George Bush in particular and the right wing in general. They came to form a progressive movement that will shape American politics for years to come. And they came to rub shoulders. Ben rubs shoulders with *Nation* editor Katrina vanden Heuvel, who rubs shoulders with Howard Dean, who rubs shoulders with billionaire financier George Soros, who rubs shoulders with New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. Hillary Clinton is here, as is Arianna Huffington. Amazingly, Al Franken is not.

It's dizzying. Standing at Ben's Wellstone Action booth, you can see booths for Common Cause, Progressive Majority, United Steelworkers of America, Public Campaign, and so on. There's the conference book shop where one can purchase the collected Chomsky, along with Jim Hightower and Paul Krugman and Howard Zinn, or maybe *The New Pearl Harbor* (as in the one FDR let happen), which argues that President Bush had advance knowledge of the September 11 terrorist attacks. (*The New Pearl Harbor*, incidentally, is outselling the works of Hightower, Krugman, and Zinn at Amazon.com.) Over there is the booth for Fenton Communications, the lefty public relations firm that flacks for MoveOn.org and sundry others, including the antiwar September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.

But if the celebrities are a draw, what the organizers really hope the Bens of America will take home are the techniques and expertise they pick up in smaller break-out sessions. Like the one in the Roosevelt Room, where a small crowd assembles for a panel discussion on "Guns, God, and Gays: The Role of Social Issues in the 2004 Election." A pixieish woman from Progressive Majority walks to the front of the room and leans against the wall, her frizzled hair splaying out in several directions. It's packed and muggy here. She looks exhausted. "Anyone not heard my spiel yet?" she asks. A few people raise their hands. She sighs. "Only one? Two? Okay then." Pause. "We are a nonpartisan organization. I must say that." Another pause. She looks around the room. "Having said that, let me introduce our panel." There's Joe Sudbay, formerly of Handgun Control; Barb Menard of Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights group; Beth Shipp of NARAL Pro-Choice America, the abortion rights group, and Tanya Clay of Ralph Neas's People for the American Way.

Sudbay goes first. He's an optimist. "The guns issue works in swing districts," he says, meaning that swing voters and moderates are supportive of restrictions on gun ownership. There are murmurs of disbelief. "Yes," Sudbay continues, "that's inconsistent with the spin here in Washington." The spin here in Washington is that the guns issue works against liberals. But that's only because "liberals are easy scapegoats when things don't go right."

Sudbay is a compact man, with close-cropped hair, and he speaks quickly, punctuating each adjective and verb with a gesture of the arm. Gun control is popular! he says. It is popular in Missouri, it is popular in Virginia, it is popular in Pennsylvania, it is popular in Florida. Liberals need to be more forceful in combating the right wing's rhetoric on the issue. The truth is John Kerry knows a lot about guns and assault weapons.

Matthew Continetti is a reporter at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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"John Kerry's been shot at by AK-47s."

People nod their heads.

Sudbay stops talking. He inhales sharply. Then he lowers his voice. "It's important for you as progressives to understand this," he says. He is whispering. "The NRA is very much a foundation of the right wing. It's not a hunting and fishing club."

Someone in the crowd says, "Uh-huh."

"On their board is Grover Norquist." Sudbay pauses for dramatic effect. "Everyone knows Grover." He sits down. The crowd applauds.

Next up is Barb Menard, the deputy political director of Human Rights Campaign. "I guess I'm the gay part of the panel," she says. The audience laughs. Like Joe, Barb is an optimist. Human Rights Campaign is growing. Its membership is some 500,000 strong. They have a staff of over 100 at their downtown Washington headquarters.

But these are tough times: "We're getting hit at from all sides." Here's what gets Menard excited, however: A constitutional amendment banning gay marriage isn't polling well. Even though a constitutional amendment is "an issue that the right wing has seized on" because "they think it's a way to get out their base."

In fact, says Menard, Americans don't want to talk about gay marriage. They'd rather talk about the economy and health care and national security. She knows this because Human Rights Campaign commissioned Democratic pollster Peter D. Hart to conduct focus groups on the topic. Menard hands out a packet that shows the focus groups' results. Go back to your communities and talk about the issue in the way the focus groups suggest, she says.

And what do the focus groups suggest? Well, "Voters are largely ignorant of the constitutional amendment process." And "Voters are unaware of the Defense of Marriage Act." What's more, "Voters believe that the Constitution is amended frequently." Thus one must call opponents of gay marriage bigots: "Support for the FMA should be tied to mean-spirited ideological extremists who also oppose the most basic protections for gays and lesbians."

Interestingly, "blaming Bush doesn't work" on this issue, because "most moderate voters believe that Bush is following his conscience . . . and they respect him for it." Instead an activist should say that the FMA is "discriminatory," that it "undermines the Constitution," and that it's "unnecessary." Menard sits down.

Beth Shipp, NARAL Pro-Choice America's political director, stands up. "Social issues are what's going to make the difference in this election," she says. Abortion rights are as popular as gun control and gay marriage. "People firmly believe in their fundamental rights to privacy." Polling and focus groups show this to be so. She sizes up the audience: "Can anyone tell me five anti-choice things Bush has done?"

Shouts from the crowd: "Gag rules!" "Restrictions on women soldiers' rights to abortion!" "Judges!"

The audience quiets. That's only three.

A woman in the front row says, "Um, taking away funding for overseas abort—"

But Shipp cuts her off. "You're talking about the gag rule," she says. Unlike Bush, she continues, "the one thing which John Kerry has been absolutely consistent on is his record on choice." And polling is helping NARAL target 18- to 39-year-old women in key swing states. Also, polling is alarming NARAL. "The scary part for me," Shipp says, "is that people believe Bush hasn't acted on his personal beliefs. But that's what they want you to believe. They want you to be uneducated. They want you not to know what they are doing." She takes a sip of water. "The truth is we're one broken hip away from losing *Roe* v. *Wade*."

A woman in pearls scribbles something in a thick black notebook.

Last to speak is Tanya Clay, the deputy director of public policy for People for the American Way. But Clay has a problem. The overhead projector is broken. So she can't show her PowerPoint presentation. "Does anyone know how to use this thing?" she asks.

"Did you reboot?" one man suggests.

People start to mill about the room.

Someone asks Beth Shipp a question about partial-birth abortion. "Ugh," she says. "What a disaster! Partial-birth was messaged wrong from the beginning." The audience nods its approval.

The projector is fixed. Clay talks about People for the American Way. "We monitor all right-wing activities," she says. "We're trying to figure out a way to take back the debate." Because "the right wing is taking advantage of issues by infusing religion and politics."

Clay has a slide that shows how the right wing does this. It shows how the right wing says progressives are anti-Christian. And since good Christians are good Americans, progressives are thus anti-American. Q.E.D. Plus the right wing says progressives are antireligious zealots, because progressives seek the separation of church and state. And antireligious zealots are anti-American. "That's how they get you," Tanya says. She fumbles with the slide projector. "That's it," she mumbles to herself. "That's the next one. I don't want that one."

Menard squints and looks off into the distance. Shipp yawns. Joe Sudbay sits still, his arms folded across his chest. The audience is distracted.

"If we continue this erosion of church and state, we'll end up under a tyranny of one church," Tanya says. To prevent this, activists need to "Wedge the Right." This means you need to identify the right wing's rhetoric and attack it. "That's how you do it," Tanya says. "Throw that back at them. Tell them, 'You're the one trying to pit religions against one another.' That's religious bigotry. That's how you get back at them.

"You've got to wedge back the right. I got some more slides."

Time is up, however. Another

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panel is about to start. But there's still a moment for questions. The audience is silent. Thoughtful. Then a man standing in the back of the room raises his hand. Menard calls on him.

"I'm a Baptist pastor," he says. A few people gasp. Menard raises an eyebrow. "And it seems to me we need to develop some religious language that taps into the values of religious people." The pastor has gray hair and a Texas accent. Later he tells me he's from Virginia Beach. A backpack is slung low over his shoulder.

"I keep looking for some way I can address my congregation," he continues. They won't listen when it comes to economic equality issues, he says, because they're scared away by social liberalism. He wants answers.

Beth Shipp shakes her head. "It's no use" sometimes, she says. "We've done virtual target modeling. It breaks a community down house by house. So we know who we shouldn't even bother talking to."

The pastor isn't satisfied. "I need to say something," he says.

A woman sitting in the back row chimes in. "I have a follow up on that," she says. "I'm from Loudoun County, Virginia."

More gasps. Loudoun County is a right-wing haven, the woman explains. A Phyllis Schlafly acolyte sits on the county board.

"Yikes," the young man sitting next to me mutters.

"Here's my question," the woman from Loudoun County says. "These people are trying to forward their agendas. And we're helpless." She gestures to the crowd. "You can't talk to them. How can we talk to them?"

All eyes turn toward the panel. People lean forward in their chairs.

"We need some type of language," the pastor says again, softly.

Joe purses his lips. Barb is silent. Tanya looks at the slide projector. Moments pass.

Finally Beth Shipp offers her answer:

"Why the hell would you live in Loudoun County?" ♦

About That Budget Deficit

It's shrinking.

BY FRED BARNES

THE WHITE HOUSE, the Treasury Department, congressional Republicans, President Bush's reelection campaign—in unison, they rushed forward last week to tout the new job growth numbers. What's most striking is the economy is now on pace to create 2.8 million jobs in 2004, more than offsetting job losses suffered earlier in the Bush administration. And there's more good news on an issue related to the economy—the deficit. Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, citing the deficit, has accused Bush of fiscal irresponsibility. Now the deficit is shrinking so quickly that the president, if reelected, should be able to claim he's near to cutting the deficit in half—and not in five years, as he had promised, but in two.

The actual deficit number, projected to be $521 billion in 2004, probably won't be cut in half by 2006. But the deficit as a percentage of the gross domestic product—a more meaningful yardstick—most likely will be. By 2006, it should settle at 2.1 percent or 2.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product, which is the average for the deficit since World War II. At that level, it would not be harmful (or particularly helpful) to the economy.

Bush first vowed to trim the deficit in half last summer. In December he told reporters the goal was based on "reasonable growth assumptions." The administration, in fact, has adopted the relatively conservative assumptions of the Blue Chip forecast of respected economists. In his State of the Union address, Bush declared again: "We can cut the deficit in half over the next five years." And in the 2005 budget released a few weeks later, the deficit was projected to drop from 4.5 percent of GDP in 2004 to 2.1 percent in 2006. At the time that projection seemed highly optimistic, given the huge expense of the military occupation of Iraq. Now it appears to be on target or even pessimistic.

Already in 2004, the deficit has been decreasing dramatically. The $20 billion "plug" in the 2004 budget to cover unanticipated spending will not be needed. With faster-than-expected economic growth, revenues are $40 billion higher than projected. So instead of a $521 billion deficit this year, administration officials expect it to fall between $450 billion and $460 billion. Bill Hoagland, an economic adviser to Senate majority leader Bill Frist, has said it could dip to $420 billion.

Sorry for all the green eyeshade material, but there's more. The deficit for 2005 is projected to be $364 billion, not counting the spending for Iraq, which is tentatively forecast to be roughly $58 billion. Officials believe, however, that increased revenues due to faster growth will more than cover the Iraq expense. As a result, the deficit could dip to $320 billion to $330 billion, but in any case shouldn't exceed $360 billion.

After a year or so, economic projections turn into guesswork. That said, last February's budget projected the deficit would decline to $268 billion in 2006 and then drift downward for the next three years to $237 billion in 2009. According to projections, the 2009 deficit would be a mere 1.6 percent of GDP, far less than the 60-year average for deficits. But

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who knows? Only the current numbers, with revenues exceeding expectations, are certain.

The current numbers alone give Bush valuable economic talking points. Despite the added expense of Iraq, the deficit is improving. True, the gains aren't as significant as the pickup of nearly one million jobs in the past three months. But the shrinking deficit is further evidence that the Bush tax cuts are working, thus buttressing the president's opposition to Kerry's proposal to eliminate the tax cuts for those earning more than $200,000 annually.

There's talk inside the administration of a major effort to trim the deficit on the spending side, not just through increased revenues. That is, if Bush is elected to a second term. This initiative would be led by Josh Bolten, the head of the Office of Management and Budget. Bolten is especially close to the president and is a figure of rising influence in the White House. For the 2006 budget, which would be released early next year, Bolten's office has suggested serious spending cuts in preliminary exchanges with federal departments and agencies. If nothing else, a program of budget austerity would rid Bush of an image he dislikes, that of a big spender. ♦

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Political Porn

A know-nothing teach-in on Abu Ghraib.

BY TIM MARCHMAN

Evanston, Ill.

ONE MUST have either a keen sense of irony or an utter lack of it to stage a teach-in in 2004. Painfully but unsurprisingly it was the latter on display last week at Northwestern University, where a sundry collection of appallingly uninformed academics gathered to confirm to one another and to the predictable collection of about 100 of the earnest young and the bored old that the torture of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. forces is very, very bad.

The highlight of the June 1 event was a shrieking performance by W.J.T. Mitchell, a professor at the University of Chicago and editor of *Critical Inquiry*, a quarterly journal of pretentiousness. Looking as if he'd staggered all the way up to Evanston from a Hyde Park soup kitchen, Mitchell offered a slideshow of photographs which, he claimed with a knowing leer, "were taken by contractors. These show what's really been going on in Iraqi prisons." He then proceeded to show a slide of four disgusting pictures supposedly depicting the rape of Iraqi women by American soldiers.

To anyone who truly practices critical inquiry, it should have been obvious that the women in the photos were Westerners, and the uniforms about as close to regulation as Mitchell's own disheveled ensemble. The photos, in fact, are fakes known to have originated with a Los Angeles-based pornographer. Mitchell, however, trembled with righteous indignation.

That no one in the room pointed out that these were notorious and widely distributed fakes should perhaps not have been surprising. What was advertised as an apolitical discussion of a grave issue was assumed by attendees and participants alike to be a bash-Bush session; truth and falsehood, for the most part, were not on the agenda.

The event started with four religious sorts discussing the language of morality. They agreed that all religious traditions teach that torture is bad, and seemed to agree that the president's use of the term "evil" to describe 9/11 was responsible for Abu Ghraib. This set the tone.

After the religionists came an English professor who talked about the poetry of witness, denounced America's "more than 100 imperialist wars," chastised the nation for not having invaded Yugoslavia, South Africa, or Rwanda, and dubiously asserted that President Bush "called the present war a crusade against Muslims." A sensitive young woman felt moved to say, "How happy I am that there is this forum." The poet nodded solemnly.

An anthropologist talked at length about Michel Foucault and said "profound" a lot. Then came a woman who showed slides of familiar war images accompanied by a recitation of President Bush's sliding poll numbers and a communications professor who lamented the decline in the quality of American propaganda.

The next two presentations, drawing as they did on genuine experience and expertise, were glaringly out of place. First Scott Portman and Marianne Joyce, who work with refugees and victims of torture, eloquently described the effects and consequences of torture. Portman, a former worker in Kurdistan, told the audience of the notoriety of Abu Ghraib under the Baath and said of the present scandal, "I can think of nothing other than

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demolition of shrines in Najaf and Karbala that would have a more deleterious effect" on Iraqi opinion.

Following them was Captain Dan Moore of Northwestern's ROTC program. Describing Abu Ghraib as "a moral Chernobyl," he explained that we are presently in a moral conflict, not a war of attrition or maneuver, and tried to make the skeptical crowd understand how disastrous the scandal is within the framework of American military discipline. This was a hard sell to make to people who believe everything the military does is a crime. Moore was asked how exactly it was possible to be antiwar and pro-military. His lack of exasperation was admirable.

But the spirit of the event was better captured by the interlude between these serious presentations. A grinning emcee distributed door prizes. I won a deck of "55 Most Wanted Hawks" playing cards (the aces are Karl Rove, George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney).

After Moore, there were another dozen speeches—mostly drivel along the lines described above. Two speakers rose above the occasion: Douglas Cassel, a law professor specializing in human rights, made an eloquent case for an independent investigation into civilian culpability for Abu Ghraib, and Gene Stoltzfus of Christian Peacemakers described the chaos he had met in trying to deal with the coalition's detention system while in Iraq.

In short, those with experience and knowledge of human rights work and the war in Iraq, who unfortunately were few and far between, understood the gravity of what was being discussed; the rest saw it as another arrow in the anti-Bush quiver. Much indignation was expressed over Senator James Inhofe's comment that he was "outraged by the outrage." Given the low level of seriousness and knowledge on display from professors collectively charged with the education of thousands of young people, one was tempted to conclude that had Inhofe been commenting on the Northwestern teach-in, his remark would have been amply justified. ♦

Stone Walls and Wal-Mart

Preserving Vermont.

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

SOMETIMES WHEN I am deer hunting and futilely following a track, I come across the remains of an old stone wall at the top of one of Vermont's small mountains, a mile or more from the nearest road or cleared ground. It is always a melancholy sort of moment. Somebody, you think, once farmed this ground. You try to imagine the work that went into cutting down the trees (no chain saws back then), digging and burning the stumps, and plowing the earth, which was full of stones. The stones weren't good for anything so they went into this wall—makes your back ache to think about it—and here they still sit, while the land has gone back to second-growth hardwoods. Vermont was 90 percent cleared and 10 percent forested a century ago—percentages that are now almost exactly reversed.

But what, you wonder, happened to the family that once tried to farm this place?

Gone on, certainly, to other things. Moved to town. Left the state. Went to college. Got work in the city. The great-grandchildren now live in suburbs where they cut the grass with a lawn tractor bought at the Wal-Mart.

So things change; even in Vermont. Though the National Trust for Historic Preservation doesn't think this is an especially good idea. Last week, it declared the entire state hallowed ground against the dire and imminent threat posed by . . . Wal-Mart.

The Arkansas leviathan currently runs four stores in the state—all small by Wal-Mart standards. You could probably cruise every aisle and be done in less than an hour. These stores appeared in the state only in the last decade or so, after stiff resistance from preservationists. Wal-Mart had to agree to operate out of existing shopping centers that had been abandoned by other operators. The one in Bennington where I sometimes shop (great prices on rifle ammunition) had been home to a K-Mart, I believe, though it may have been an Ames. One of the merchants, at any rate, that choked on Wal-Mart's dust.

Now Wal-Mart wants to expand some of the existing operations and open some new stores, the precise number being still unclear. What is certain is that Wal-Mart is in for a fight.

The shape of the fight is familiar enough. What gladiators in the Coliseum were for the Romans and the Super Bowl is to most of America . . . that is what a zoning, land use, development dispute is to modern Vermonters. If a ski resort should announce plans to add another lift or —perish the thought—some new condominiums to its operation, the forces of preservation can be counted on to come howling out of the woods and muster on the town green, armed with petitions, ready to march and hold hearings . . . endless hearings. These hearings are a form of trench warfare in the battle for Vermont.

But they are only one tactic, and the forces of resistance use others to stall and confound their enemies. When a business in the town to the south of me wanted to build a new office building off the main highway (a three-lane—only Vermont has three-lane highways), the resistance claimed that the site was on a "bear

Geoffrey Norman is a writer in Vermont.

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corridor." My own experience with bears in Vermont has been that they pretty much go where they want and aren't going to throw up their paws and quit because an office building is between where they are and where they want to get. Still . . . studies were done, accommodations were made, money was paid. The office building went up and, to the relief of everyone, there are *still* bears in the woods.

While bears are good, arrowheads are better. A private school near me had picked a site for a new building but was forced to find another location because that one contained evidence that Indians had once used it. The same tactic stalled a commercial project for months, though the arrowhead shard in question could not be produced when a judge asked to see it.

These are tough battles, and the forces of resistance sometimes fight dirty. No doubt they feel they have to. The stakes, after all, are high and the enemy is ruthless.

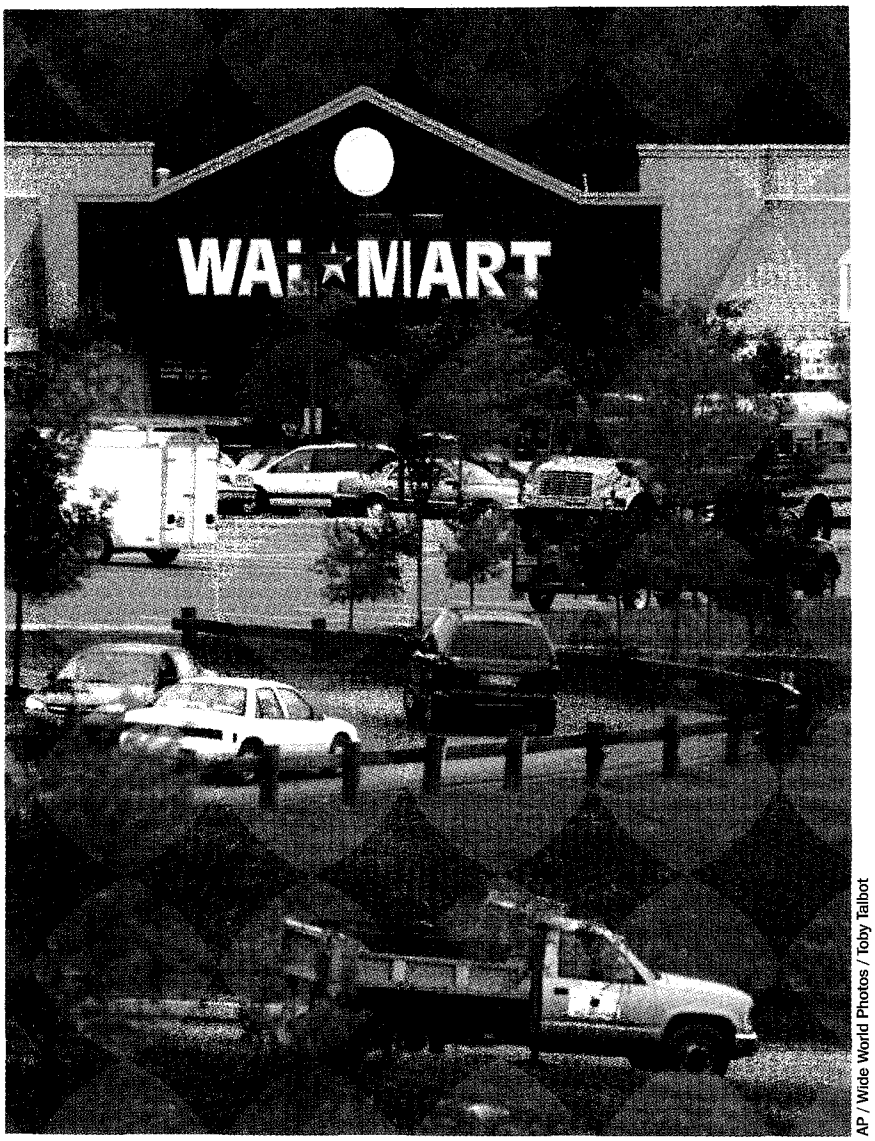
Which, in the case of Wal-Mart, is certainly true. The company is famously hard-nosed with vendors and employees. You don't sell at everyday low prices by being nice.

So it promises to be a good, spirited gutfight, and it ought to make for some lively conversation on those dull winter nights between the election and town meeting day.

Question is: Whose side to take?

It is easy to brush off the resistance to Wal-Mart as, among other things, elitist. Certainly there is some of that. People who have made—or inherited—a bundle and come to Vermont to build a 12,000-square-foot house and enjoy the simple life in the country don't want big-box stores cluttering up the countryside. If that means that the people who mow the grass and plow the driveway have to pay higher prices for engine oil and tires . . . well, life is hard.

The most beguiling anti-Wal-Mart argument is that the big stores will chase the little ones off. The mom and pops will not be able to compete with those famous everyday low prices, and



AP / Wide World Photos / Toby Talbot

The Wal-Mart in Williston, Vermont

Vermont's picturesque little towns will soon be hollow at the core. There isn't much disputing this. The place where I used to buy my ammunition went out of business.

The kind of commerce that Wal-Mart represents will change the state, no getting around that. The small business will go the way of the small farm. To which market purists will say, "Get used to it," and cite Joseph Schumpeter's famous formulation.

But calling something "creative destruction" doesn't necessarily sanction it. After all, it does sort of depend on what's being destroyed and what is being created, doesn't it? And just because some of the anti-Wal-Mart people are fools, that doesn't necessarily mean that their cause is foolish. If Wal-Mart (and the mall culture, in general) represents the future, then the past is looking pretty good.

Resistance to the forces of the market no doubt is quixotic. Trying to hold back Wal-Mart is probably an exercise in pure futility. But to my way of thinking, that's the best argument for making the fight. The Green Mountain Boys started a revolution a few miles from where I live, but they, admittedly, were going up against a mere king. The world's greatest retailer—and richest corporation—will be a lot tougher.

So as Ethan Allen famously said, "Hey, bring it on." ♦

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A Big Fat Jury Verdict

Trial lawyers aren't the only problem with the tort system. BY WILLIAM TUCKER

IN LATE APRIL, a Beaumont, Texas, jury voted to award $1 billion to the family of a plaintiff who allegedly lost her life as a result of taking fen-phen, a drug combination popular among dieters in the 1990s before it was linked to heart-valve damage. The woman, who was morbidly obese and whose family had a history of heart problems, took fen-phen for five months in 1997 before Wyeth Laboratories, the losers in the lawsuit, withdrew their drug Pondimin (the "fen" half of the combo) from the market. She also took four other diet drugs before being diagnosed with hypertension in 2002.

John O'Quinn, the Elmer Gantry of Texas tort law, preached to the jury that Wyeth had "acted with malice in marketing of this drug by putting its making of money ahead of human life and safety." The jury awarded more than $113 million in compensatory damages and tacked on $900 million in punitive damages.

The verdict will probably be knocked down to something more reasonable—say $50 million. Wyeth has set up a $3.75 billion trust fund to accommodate the victims of fen-phen, but 75,000 people have already opted out of the class action and intend to sue separately. The idea that one victim with a good lawyer will walk away with about $1 billion of that pool is a little impractical. The verdict blatantly violates a Texas statute that says punitive damages can only double compensatory damages. But Texas courts—which have made suing major corporations a cottage industry—aren't paying much attention. Indeed, the trial judge upheld the award.

What the verdict did emphasize is something that is inching towards becoming a consensus among experts—juries that hand down such mind-boggling damage awards have no idea what they're doing. The most dramatic research has been assembled by University of Chicago professors Cass Sunstein and Reid Hastie, working with a team that included Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman of Princeton and David Schkade of the University of Texas, and was published a couple of years ago as *Punitive Damages: How Juries Decide* (University of Chicago Press, 2002). Sunstein presented their findings at an April 28 conference on punitive damages in Washington sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The book includes several studies involving more than 8,000 jury-eligible citizens in Illinois, Colorado, Texas, Arizona, and Nevada. In one study, "jurors," who were paid for their time, were brought together in small groups over the course of five years for what amounted to mock trials. They were presented with evidence and jury instructions from a series of actual courtroom cases and asked to reach a verdict in two ways. They were asked to both rank the culpability of the defendant on a scale from zero to six, and to assign a dollar value in punitive damages that would reflect the degree of culpability.

"The responses to the first question are extraordinarily uniform across the board," says Sunstein. "The correlation is about .99," which is to say almost unanimous. "Race, sex, economic class—it makes absolutely no difference. We attribute this remarkable degree of consensus to shared cultural standards in judging responsibility for social conduct."

When it came to assigning dollar amounts that reflect this culpability, however, the results were all over the lot. "There's a slight bell curve but it's skewed far to the right," meaning toward higher awards, says Schkade. "The figures ranged anywhere from a few thousand to hundreds of millions. People were obviously making a stab in the dark."

Sunstein says these findings duplicate psychological results going back to the 1950s, where people were asked to perform a simple task like evaluating the brightness of a light or the loudness of a noise. "If you give people a scale from zero to ten, they come up with very uniform results," he says. "But if you give them a scale from zero to infinity with no further explanation, the consensus falls apart. It's called 'scaling without a modulus.' People need an anchor to have their evaluation make sense.

"All this undermines the populist credentials of juries when it comes to assigning punitive damages," he says. "When you ask a group of people to pick a number between one and infinity without any reference to what other juries have awarded in similar situations, you're not matching human capabilities to the demand of the task."

Sunstein and his coauthors assumed that juries would settle on an award amount in the manner of Olympic gymnastics judges—with the highs and lows thrown out and the group deciding on something in the middle. "In each case, we presumed that the median juror would represent the entire group's decision," says Sunstein. But the results were otherwise. In 500 deliberations, conducted with 3,000 jurors, "We found that, on average, where jurors found a high degree of reprehensibility, the jury was more punitive than its median member. Where perceived guilt was low, on the other hand, the jury was less punitive than its median member."

William Tucker is a fellow at the Discovery Institute. His book on trial lawyers, Civil Lynchings, *will be published next year.*

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Most stunning was this: In 17 percent of the cases where punitive damages were awarded, the group settled for the highest dollar award chosen by any juror; in 10 percent they reached a number *higher* than any individual juror had originally chosen. "The essential problems are compounded rather than alleviated by jury deliberations," says Sunstein.

The researchers found three other factors that help explain the jury's decision: (1) juries will give larger awards to plaintiffs who are viewed as "local"; (2) juries will give higher awards when the defendants are viewed as having a lot of money; and (3) juries will give higher awards *when the plaintiff attorney asks for higher amounts*. The last is particularly significant. It suggests that, in the no man's land of punitive damages, plaintiff attorneys can "anchor" the jury's thinking simply by asking for outlandish amounts. In one trial, simply tripling the plaintiff's request from $50 million to $150 million raised the award by $35 million.

All this goes a long way toward explaining what is going on in American courtrooms. Tort reformers now generally agree that rationalizing punitive damages would help curb the Wild West anarchy of jury verdicts. "What's happened is the civil courts have essentially taken over what is supposed to be a punitive function," says Walter E. Dellinger III, professor at Duke University Law School. "Yet at the same time, most of the protections afforded to criminal defendants by the Constitution have not been carried over for civil defendants."

One of the most obvious is the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of "excessive fines." In a highly controversial decision, the Supreme Court decided in 1989 that the Eighth Amendment does *not* protect civil defendants because punitive damages—even though they might stretch into the billions—do not constitute "fines." In *State Farm* v. *Campbell*, the Court did decide, however, that punitive damages could be regulated under the more ambiguous Fourteenth Amendment. The justices further suggested that punitive damages should not exceed compensatory damages by a factor of 9 to 1—which would still make the fen-phen verdict permissible.

The real question is whether juries should be picking these numbers at all—at least without some kind of statutory guideline. "When someone is convicted of armed robbery, we don't say to the jury, 'All right, how many years do you think they should serve? Pick a number between 1 and 80,'" says Dellinger. "We have statutory sentencing and then the judge decides."

Trial lawyers, of course, will go to the mat to protect their right to charm a jury. "Punitive damages are delivered in only 5 percent of all cases," says Thomas Goldstein, a Washington attorney who argued *State Farm* before the Supreme Court. "Frankly I can't see where there's any crisis at all."

But with jury verdicts becoming a billion-dollar lottery, others are likely to feel that the time has come to act. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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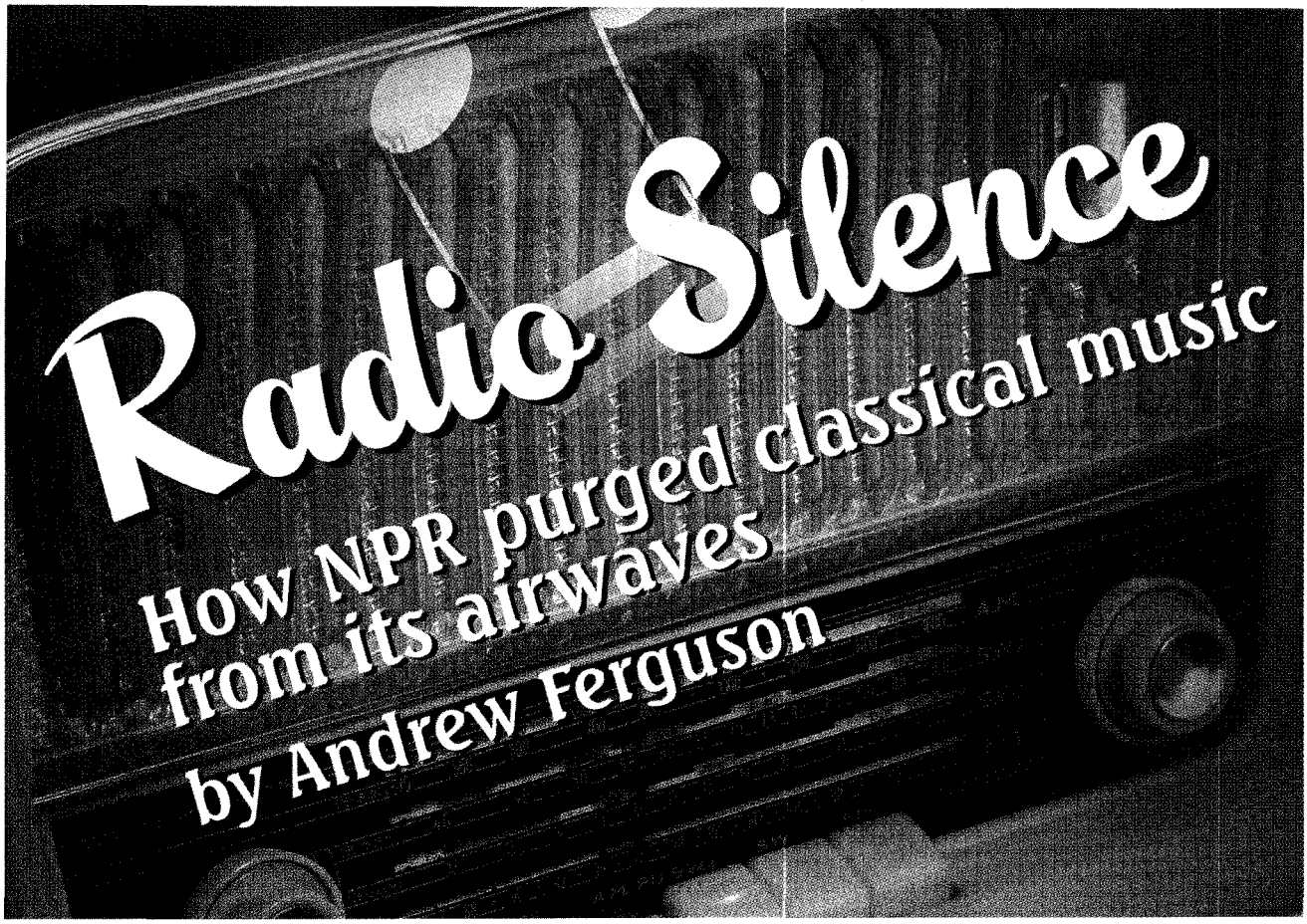

Radio Silence

How NPR purged classical music from its airwaves

by Andrew Ferguson

Masterfile / Robert G. Young

If the American Federation of Blacksmiths and Buggywhip Manufacturers had held a convention in 1910, in those last sullen moments before the Horseless Carriage put them all out of business, then this is what it must have felt like—the same forced cheerfulness laid over the same defeated air, the same stiff upper lip at the prospect of the inescapable end. Outside the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort, on the Florida coast near Tampa Bay, the beach was streaked with wind and black thunderheads stacked up along the horizon. Inside the hotel, members of the Association of Music Personnel in Public Radio had gathered for their 42nd annual convention. These are the programmers who play what remains of classical music on America's noncommercial radio stations. They milled about the Citrus Room, and ducked in and out of the Mangrove Room, and stepped hopefully toward the Manatee Room, where, in the manner of all such trade conventions, a space had been set aside for interested tradesmen to hawk their wares to this select professional audience. It was nearly empty.

On a couch next to the Dolphin Room, Dave Glerum sat talking about classical music and public radio. Glerum is a friendly and thoughtful man, bearded and roundish, who serves as the music director of WMFE, the public radio station in Orlando. He's been coming to the AMPPR conference for 25 years.

"Believe it," he said. "This was once like a major trade show. You had 30 record labels here, giving records away, all kinds of free stuff. Artists would perform during the day, every night, promoting their records. There were throngs of people all weekend long. By Sunday, when you left, you still wouldn't have met 80 percent of the attendees. That's how many people there were. And now it's . . . well . . . " He waved his hand toward the conference-goers who drifted from room to room, singly or in groups of twos and threes.

Glerum has been working at WMFE since 1990. He was hired away from WXXI in Rochester, New York, where he'd worked for more than 10 years. In retrospect, those years now look like the tail end of the glory days of classical programming on the nation's public radio stations, when a large majority of them devoted a large majority of their airtime to music.

"When I came to WMFE, we had three full-time on-air announcers and two part-time announcers," he said. "Now we have no part-time announcers and one full-time announcer." He tapped his chest. "Me."

Like most public radio stations, WMFE was conceived as a "fine arts" station, broadcasting classical music and other arts programs around the clock. Today it carries

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only three hours a day of its own classical programming. The rest is talk—call-in shows, BBC news, interview shows, as well as the flagship newsmagazines from National Public Radio, *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*—plus several hours, most of them overnight, of a syndicated classical music service, called Classical 24, that originates from a studio in Minnesota but is designed to sound like local programming wherever it's played. Listeners in Orlando worry that much of even this canned music will soon be replaced by more talk shows. And they're right to worry.

"You do get the feeling a little of being an anachronism," Glerum said. "There's no question that there's less and less classical music on the radio now, and more and more programming that's produced somewhere else. The trend seems kind of overwhelming at times, like something you can't overcome.

"But do I think classical music will disappear from public radio altogether? No. I can't think that. Its power to enrich our lives and our communities is just too great. Its flame will never be extinguished. Maybe that sounds hokey. But I believe it. You sort of have to."

Things are rough all over, if you like to listen to classical music on the radio—and even rougher if, like the members of AMPPR, you try to make a living putting it on the air. What listeners in Orlando have seen happen at Glerum's station is a slow-motion version of what has happened to public radio across the country. Music—not merely classical but also jazz, folk, blues, and bluegrass, once staples of public radio programming—is slowly being withdrawn from the public airwaves. According to data from the trade group M Street Group, the number of noncommercial stations identified as "classical" has been cut in half since 1993, while the number of noncommercial news-talk stations has tripled. Data from the Public Radio Tracking Study, commissioned by public radio stations, tell the same story. From 1995 to 2002, the number of locally generated classical music hours on public radio declined roughly 10 percent, even as the number of public radio stations greatly increased; meanwhile, over the same period, the number of news-talk hours rose by more than 150 percent. As the tracking study researchers wrote in their report, with unseemly enthusiasm: "Local classical music just sits there, while NPR news-talk races ahead."

The change hasn't gone unnoticed, of course. Major newspapers run stories about it every once in a while, especially when a large market, such as Boston or San Francisco or St. Louis, suddenly finds itself, for the first time in 50 years, without a public radio station that plays classical music. But how the change has come about has never been adequately explained. That's too bad, because this reinvention of the nation's public airwaves is a signal episode in the ongoing story of the upper-class Baby Boomers—"Liberal Affluent Boomers," as the public radio research puts it, or LABs, as we'll call them for short—who have remade American culture in their image.

And yet—so what? A reader with small-government, libertarian-conservative sympathies will raise the inevitable question: Why should government-supported radio exist at all? For those who look to public radio for classical music (or for any of the other traditional, minority tastes that are being purged from its airwaves), the principled small-government man will ask, Scrooge-like: Are there no CDs? Is there not satellite radio? Aren't there many other private means by which such eccentrics may satisfy their craving? Likewise for those who want news and talk from their public station: Is there no Limbaugh for right-wingers? Does not the left-wing Radio America exist, at least for the next couple weeks? Does not every medium-sized city on up have an all-news AM station to fill your appetite for up-to-the-minute reports from everywhere all the time? Why should the taxpayers pay for what you can provide for yourself?

These are good questions, I suppose, but the argument they are meant to provoke ended long ago. Government radio is here to stay. If the budget pinchers under Ronald Reagan couldn't privatize public radio, and the ideologues of the Gingrich Revolution couldn't do it a decade later, we ought to get used to it, and perhaps survey the larger spectacle of its astonishing growth from a remote outpost in radio Siberia to a colossus of the nation's media landscape. From its 3 million listeners in the early 1970s to the 29 million it claims today, public radio has come to be, as its own promotional materials immodestly say, "a dominant intellectual force in American life." The interesting questions nowadays are, What does public radio, in its present incarnation, say about the public it appeals to? What does it tell us about the cultural elite whose instrument it has become? If public radio is here to stay, what kind of radio will it be?

Over the past ten years, the LABs who run the country's cultural institutions have given their answer: *Cut the boring music. Let's talk.*

Public radio has always been a creature of its time. An interesting academic paper about the evolution of public radio, "Guys in Suits with Charts," by a historian named Alan G. Stavitsky, describes "the transformation of public radio from its educational, service-based origins to an audience-driven orientation." But public radio

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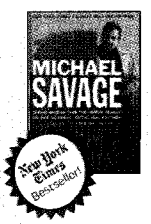

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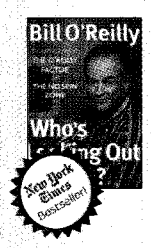

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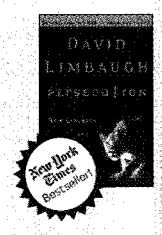

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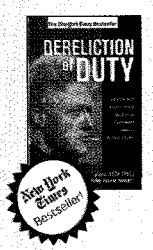

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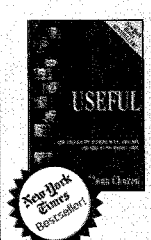

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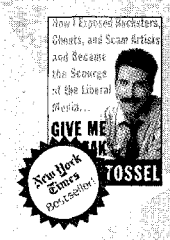

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has always been audience-driven—though people didn't use terms like that back in the 1920s, when the audience was quite different. That was when an archipelago of "educational radio" stations popped up across the country, manned by do-gooders and borne across low-output FM frequencies. These were usually jerry-rigged, community-run operations, broadcasting weather reports and household hints about carpentry and dress-making, cooking techniques and engine repair, with special attention to the daily demands of the farming life. (*Broadcast* is a term borrowed from farmers, describing what they do with seeds across a field.) Many of the stations were soon scooped up by local school boards or colleges as an aid to education. After the Second World War, the FCC made the arrangements official by allocating the left end of the FM dial exclusively to educational radio.

Educational radio stations through the fifties and sixties resembled cable TV public-access channels today—a parade of amateurish enthusiasts ventilating their micro-obsessions. Cooking class would be followed by poetry hour, after which a tape would play of the opening of the German parliament, followed by a soundtrack of Lithuanian clogdancers. As part of the Great Society, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting was chartered in 1967 to consolidate the educational stations (and television stations, too, of course) into a national network. *Educational* radio was now called *public* radio, and together the scattered stations formed National Public Radio in 1970.

By then the stations' dominant format was serious music, jazz in some places but mostly classical performances and recordings. The mission of public broadcasting, according to its founders, was "public service": more particularly, to provide cultural programming that commercial broadcasters, under pressure to acquire the maximum number of listeners in order to make the maximum amount of money, could not. It's an odd task public broadcasting was given, needless to say—offering a service precisely *because* it's not terribly popular. But for more than a decade it seemed to suit the programmers of public radio just fine. And classical music fit the bill: a public service everyone knew to be elevated and worthy, an art form that was good for the polity and good for the soul.

Public radio was thus a creature of what we have come to know, since its demise, as middlebrow culture. From the Book of the Month Club to television shows like *Omnibus* and *Playhouse 90*, the middlebrow bridged high culture to low and tried self-consciously to make the best of artistic achievement accessible to the general population of the great commercial Republic. It was earnest and self-improving and unashamedly hierarchical, summoning everyone who showed a glimmer of interest to the ideals of beauty and excellence. It was elitist and populist all at once.

"For those first generations of public broadcasters, it was simply understood that certain kinds of programming had to be perpetuated," says Bob Goldfarb, a former public radio consultant who is now program director at KING, a commercial classical station in Seattle. "Arts programming, classical music, and the like—these were public goods, ipso facto, that had to be preserved for the cultural health of the community, the way a national park is a good in itself and must be preserved. And public radio was one way to preserve them."

From the start National Public Radio was a network like no other. In the typical commercial arrangement, networks own their affiliates. NPR is owned by its member stations, who pay fees for the programming it generates; otherwise each public radio station is independently operated, and each, in the first decades, generated the bulk of its own programming. The first nationally distributed NPR program was the newsmagazine show *All Things Considered*, which nowadays runs on most public radio stations every weekday afternoon.

"It's a sign of how haphazard things were back then that ATC was the first major programming NPR attempted," says Peter Dominowski, a veteran public radio programmer and now an independent consultant. "Think about it. Most radio listening, especially for news, occurs in the morning, between six and nine. So when do we put on *All Things Considered*? In the afternoon. We didn't even know enough to put on a program at the time most people would want to listen to it.

"Of course, there's another reason NPR didn't go with a morning show right at first: Nobody wanted to wake up that early. You think I'm kidding, but I'm not."

The morning show eventually went on the air in 1979. Ten years later *Morning Edition* officially overtook *All Things Considered* as the most-listened-to NPR program, and today the two rank as the second- and third-highest rated nationally broadcast shows on the radio, behind Rush Limbaugh.

The success of NPR's newsmagazine shows symbolizes the transformation of public radio from a funky, ragtag collection of stations in the 1970s and early '80s, catering to minority tastes and other rejects of the marketplace, to the sleek and highly professional media conglomerate it is today. The transformation, says Dominowski, is the consequence of a slow, painful, system-wide "raising of awareness." A series of events shook the mission of NPR, and ultimately led to its remaking. The most influential of these was the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Indeed, it is a delightful irony—one that would appall Reaganites no less than the sophisticated LABs who run NPR—that the new, transformed public radio is itself a product of Reaganism.

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The Reagan years rebuilt public radio in two important ways. First came a fiscal panic. When it created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and later NPR, Congress declined to create an endowment for public broadcasting. Programmers were forced to return year after year for new funding. In this way the politicians hoped to keep the public broadcasting eggheads in line. When the Reagan administration, in one of its irregular spasms of fiscal austerity, threatened to cut public broadcasting budgets, public radio executives were frightened into reexamining their reliance on government funding, tenuous as it suddenly seemed. Around the same time, in 1983, a bookkeeping scandal revealed a gigantic deficit in NPR's budget. Together these forced National Public Radio and many of its member stations to an appreciation of the Reaganite ideal: Everything, it turned out, could be marketized—that is, turned into a commodity and subjected to the rigors of the marketplace, with all its fancy methodologies and desperate strategies for survival. Scrambling, they discovered new ways to sell public broadcasting.

And what do you know? In a happy coincidence, again thanks to Reaganism, these new ways of making money no longer seemed so vulgar—or, for that matter, illegal. Public broadcasting had always operated under severe constraints intended to keep it unsullied by commercialism. Under Reagan, however, the FCC got itself into a deregulating mood. It relaxed the "underwriting" rules that had prohibited public radio from carrying advertising. Under the new regulations, advertisers could be called "underwriters," and underwriters could give a station money in return for brief promotional spots that were not, under any circumstances, to be called advertising. Programmers meanwhile stepped up their solicitation of funds from corporations and foundations, and they began studying ways to produce programs that would draw in more of a better class of listener—the kind who could be relied upon to donate money to public radio, and who would, just as important, create a desirable target audience for underwriters.

If all this old history seems odd and incongruous, it should. Alert readers will notice that public radio's methods of getting money—soliciting ads, designing programs to appeal to more listeners, and jollying up big corporations—are conspicuously similar to the methods used by commercial stations in their quest to survive and dominate in the marketplace. Yet it's a funny thing about LABs: Methods that might have seemed crass and excessive when pursued by earlier generations are, in their hands, transformed into something noble. This has proved true in fields ranging from sex to real estate—why not public broadcasting? Thus the techniques of commercialization, reviled when used by commercial radio, were suddenly seen as indispensable tools in advancing public radio's essential mission of "public service."

First, however, that troublesome term *public service* would have to be redefined.

"I've seen the change happen," David Giovannoni was saying a few weeks ago. "I've been honored to be a part of it. In the eighties, and then later, with Gingrich running the Congress, we lived in fear of losing our subsidy. We had to look in the mirror and ask ourselves, Where's the money going to come from? We had to have more listeners, and we had to be more highly valued by those listeners."

We were sitting in a diner in a strip mall along a dreary stretch of highway in the far northern suburbs of Washington, D.C. Giovannoni doesn't much like to be interviewed, and I was interviewed myself, extensively, by one of his business partners before he would agree to have a talk. Now semiretired, Giovannoni is a large figure in the history of public radio, and a controversial one—which is to say, the small remnant of classical music programmers view him, with varying degrees of personal distaste, as the enemy. "Dr. Joe Baloney," they call him.

"If anyone is symbolic of the transformation of public radio, it's Giovannoni," KING's Goldfarb told me. A few years ago the *New York Times* published a long profile of him, under the headline: "Public Radio's Private Guru." "Is this the most powerful man in public radio?" the story asked, and the answer was: You bet.

Giovannoni is a radio consultant, one of a handful who, starting in the late 1970s, brought the techniques of modern research to the slapdash, Rube Goldberg world of public radio. The knowledge he gained from those techniques—the exhaustive data he gleaned from the industry bible, the Arbitron listener ratings—pointed to one message above all: For most stations in most markets, news and talk programming, rather than music programming, would bring in the most listeners and ensure the survival, and eventually the flourishing, of public radio.

In his personal tastes, he readily admits, he's not much of a music buff.

"I listen to classical once in a while," he said, stirring his coffee. "But I mostly listen to rock—fifties and sixties rock'n'roll, the music I grew up with. And I have a thing for dance music of the 1920s."

"David likes the equipment you play music on," an old acquaintance told me. "He likes to collect records. He doesn't much care about the music that's in the records."

I noticed that Giovannoni's office, in a nearby townhouse, was filled with antique phonographs and radio

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equipment, and indeed it turns out that his interest in technology is what launched his career.

In the mid-1970s, Giovannoni was a graduate student in "Communications Arts" at the University of Wisconsin, working as a teacher's assistant to a professor who specialized in analyzing the reams of radio ratings generated by Arbitron.

"I originally started running numbers because I was so bored with graduate school," he says. "I hated graduate school. And there I am sitting in a cinder block room with piles of public radio ratings. My roommate had one of the first programmable HP calculators. And here's this fascinating data set, so I started writing programs for the data. I was interested in the numbers and the applications—that's what it was about for me. I like math, and I'm good at it."

What Giovannoni found was to guide thinking about public radio for the next two decades, and does still. The conventional view had been that while public radio had a small audience, it was nevertheless intensely loyal.

"Small but loyal, that's what everybody said," Giovannoni told me. "And our line was, Well, you're half-right. It's a small audience, but it's not loyal. Public radio was literally driving people away. And anyone who listened could tell you why. It was so bad—'University of the Air,' where they'd put up a microphone in front of the professor and you could hear the chalk scratching across the chalkboard. The Radio Reader—'Chapter a Day.' Terrible, terrible stuff. Incredibly boring."

Among the boring stuff was classical music. By the early 1980s, after Giovannoni had joined NPR and helped found its Department of Research, he and other number-crunchers had discovered the "tent poles"—a legendary image in public radio lore. Charted on an x-y axis, ratings for a typical public radio station would spike up in the morning, fall into a trough midday, then spike again in late afternoon, before falling as the evening wore on. As it happens, on many stations, these tent poles, showing a surge in listenership, exactly corresponded to the morning and afternoon newsmagazines, *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*. The troughs occurred when the format switched to music.

"The question we wanted to ask was, How do we raise that huge section between the tent poles?" Giovannoni said. It was a question he began asking throughout the system as public radio worked through the fiscal panic of the 1980s.

"You can't imagine the effect David would have on people in public radio in those days," says Murray Horwitz, who used to direct arts programming for NPR. "Here's this funky group of people, they're passionate but amateurs really, and this guy walks in with piles of numbers and spreadsheets, and he's carrying Objectivity! Truth! Data! He'd say, in effect, 'I'm just like real radio, professional radio—not this pretend radio you guys are doing.' And his advice was always the same. They'd ask, 'How do we get more people to listen to our classical music station?' And the answer would come back, 'Stop playing classical music.'"

Giovannoni's main point, he says now, was a simple one—that public radio wasn't performing a public service unless people were listening to it. This notion quickly underscored the frantic quest for more and more listeners. But of course people were already listening to public radio; they just didn't represent the right kind of listeners in sufficient quantity. One finding of Giovannoni's research is that a classical audience is roughly 10 years older, on average, than a news-talk audience. And adver . . . I mean *underwriters* preferred to have their products peddled to younger listeners, just as they do on commercial stations. NPR became a brand, and a highly desirable one, and the image had to be maintained.

"*Public service* became a euphemism for *ratings*," Goldfarb says. In one recent presentation to program directors, for example, Giovannoni congratulated those who had contributed to the growth in public radio's nationwide ratings. "Five years ago, you generated 57 percent of all public service; today you generate 68 percent." Indeed, in many of Giovannoni's public radio reports, the words *ratings*, *listenership*, and *public service* are used interchangeably.

The new emphasis on ratings struck some broadcasters as unseemly. "Some protested that in the nonprofit world, it's never the point to max out the number of people you reach," Goldfarb says. "That's what for-profit broadcasters do."

The pressure on local program directors—or PDs—to conform to this new commercial sensibility became intense. Horwitz recalls one weekend retreat for public radio personnel in the early '90s, held at a conference center in rural Virginia.

"They were from a mix of stations, big and little, different formats, mostly classical, some jazz," Horwitz says. "The idea was to help the stations learn to make money—increase revenue, excuse me. So all day Saturday the consultants get up and present this huge amount of research and data, showing, or at least claiming to show, that when you got rid of music and arts and programmed news and talk instead, you spiked your numbers. Ratings go up. Donations go up. Underwriting goes up.

"Then it's late afternoon, and the consultants say, 'Okay, you've seen the data. Now you've got the night off. We want you all to go away for some downtime. And when you come back tomorrow, tell us how you're going to fix your station.'

"Sunday morning—it was just sad, pathetic. It was like

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an AA meeting. It was like total defeat. You had these PDs getting up, hanging their heads, and they're saying, 'Hi, my name's Bill, and I . . . I . . . *I've been programming opera*!"

Classical music programmers claim that much of the research from Giovannoni and his colleagues—proving that the music and arts format is an inefficient way to build audiences and perform public service—is weak at best, tendentious at worst. It's hard to disagree. Reading the research, and especially the little interpretive essays the researchers write to summarize the data, you realize that they aren't describing listeners so much as caricaturing them—idealizing the ones they like and slandering the ones they don't.

"Citizens of the world" is how Giovannoni describes listeners who are drawn to public radio by news-talk. They constitute, he's written, "a community of listeners that transcends geographic boundaries, a national, now international community of shared interests, values and beliefs . . . a community of interest in which familiarity is measured in mindsets, not miles; a family of relations in which affinity, not genetics, determines kinship. Our listeners want neighbors who hold the attitudes they hold, who seek the information they seek, who enjoy the entertainments they enjoy. . . . Public radio is the place our listeners call home. They rise and return to it daily, their roots most deeply embedded in network news programming, most reliably nourished by rich sources of reporting, writing, and producing."

Contrast these "citizens of the world" with classical music listeners, whose deficiencies were summarized in a paper published in 2002 by Walrus Research, a popular public radio research firm headed by Giovannoni protégés. Walrus gathered groups of classical music listeners from various markets into a series of focus groups, and the resulting report has been used ever since by program directors eager to eliminate or curtail music programming on their stations.

Classical music listeners, the researchers discovered, "use classical music to escape from the problems of the world." Not surprisingly, there are similarities in race (white) and income levels (very high) between the average NPR listener and the lover of classical music, yet in fact they represent two very different kinds of people. One group the researchers dubbed "Classical Monks," the other, more typical of the new NPR listeners, were "NPR Activists."

Classical Monks use the music format to attain an internal state, soothing and calm, intensely personal. NPR Activists use information from NPR News to guide their relations with other people in their community and around the globe. . . . NPR Activists love analysis and debate. More talk is better, if that talk informs their understanding of global issues. . . .

Classical listeners enter a dream world with images of paradise.

The NPR newsmagazines keep reminding us of the real world, with its social conditions, environmental changes, and economic forces. . . .

Classical Monks seek an emotion derived from the aesthetic. NPR Activists think that reason and logic, on the basis of solid information, can lead to the perfection of mankind.

The classical listener values lone serenity. NPR fans are the most politically active segment of the population.

Classical Monks vs NPR Activists

• Escape Problems	• Solve Problems
• Internal State	• External Relations
• Minimal Talk	• Discourse Debate
• Just the Facts	• In Depth
• Dream World	• Confront Reality
• Closed Exclusive	• Open Inclusive
• Beauty Emotion	• Reason Logic
• Seeking Serenity	• Political Action

Walrus Research

For those who have trouble with complete sentences, Walrus Research helpfully broke the findings down into a neat PowerPoint chart (see above). "The portal to NPR news is through the intellect," said the study. "The portal to classical music is emotional."

In sum, Walrus said: "Classical listeners use the station for gratification of their private, internal needs." Sounds kind of yucky, doesn't it? And certainly not very *public*. Catering to such people might even be considered an abdication of responsibility for a program director bent on public service.

This is an argument that the newer generation of program directors and station managers is increasingly willing to entertain. Tom Taylor, of the trade magazine *Inside Radio*, says the new generation is impeccably professional, in contrast to station personnel of 20 or even 10 years ago.

"These are very sophisticated professionals who dis-

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covered the kind of programming that generates dollars, and that is news and information," he says. "They know how to identify themselves with a particular branding profile to attract a very desirable kind of listener with a high level of income. And that listener wants his brand to be about one thing: news talk."

A public radio veteran who laments the demise of arts and music programming recalls a public radio convention in the early '90s, just as the new generation of programmers were beginning to redirect their stations away from classical music. One of the public radio researchers hooked up a group of 40 or so program directors and station managers to a "dial machine." The idea was to play a series of musical snippets, from classical through jazz and pop to hard rock, and the machine would record their reactions in real time on a graph, from high (favorable) to low (unfavorable).

"The graph recorded a perfect slanting line . . . from left to right," the veteran told me. Classical was at the low end, the least favored. Then the consultant brought out a graph showing the reactions of a group of longtime public radio listeners to the same series of musical snippets.

"The graph of the listeners showed a perfect slanting line again, but from right to left—exactly the opposite. If you overlaid the two lines, you got an x figure. The tastes of the PDs and the listeners were opposite."

When I mentioned this story to Bob Goldfarb, from KING in Seattle, he laughed.

"I'm not surprised," he said, "but that would have been a while ago. A friend of mine has an axiom: The single greatest determinant of what a public radio station plays is what the station manager likes to listen to. And nowadays not many of these people have been educated to a taste in classical music. They're news-talk people. And by now they've got a news-talk audience. A lot of classical listeners like NPR news, but a lot have gone elsewhere. Or stopped listening altogether."

The imperial ambitions of talk at NPR grow more insistent all the time. For many individual stations, the commercial track they stepped onto in the 1980s and 1990s has become a treadmill: to draw listeners, they have had to pay expensive fees to NPR for its news programming—fees often topping $1 million a year. These high costs accelerate and, in turn, require ever more listeners to cover them.

Says another NPR veteran: "Some of these public stations have now entered the kind of vicious circle that highly competitive businesses get into. It's grow or die. Keep paddling faster and faster or drown. But that was never supposed to be the point. The whole idea of having a public radio system was to partition off one part of the market from those kinds of pressures."

Of the nearly 40 programs produced by NPR, only 7, by my count, are devoted to the arts and music. Joan Kroc, widow of Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's, recently left a legacy of $235 million for NPR to spend as it pleases. Of the many ideas floated by network officials in the newspapers and trade publications about how to spend Mrs. Kroc's money, none has involved expanding music or arts programming; the first decision taken—after every employee was given a bonus—was to hire 45 more reporters for the newsmagazines. And NPR has recently attacked the tent-pole problem head-on. The debut this winter of a midday newsmagazine, called *Day to Day*, offers a boost to stations hoping to attract listeners, other than "Monks," between 9 A.M. and 3 P.M. An NPR spokesman told me it's the fastest growing program in public radio history. "The early numbers look very, very good," she said. Microsoft pays for the show. The triumph of talk is almost complete.

At the end of our long conversation in the diner, I told Giovannoni I had recently been to the AMPPR convention in Florida.

He leaned forward. "What was it like?" he asked. He had experienced unfriendly receptions at past AMPPR conferences, back when he was first spreading the word about the new ways of public service.

I told him the mood seemed kind of gloomy, like a blacksmith convention in 1910.

He laughed. "That's just about right," he said. Then he mentioned a few public stations where classical music seemed to be thriving. But he didn't seem to think much of their prospects for survival. "They've been living a charmed life for a long time," he said.

"The irony is, the economics for a classical music station are very good. It's very cheap to do classical music programming, and it's very cheap to do well. You've got an installed base of listeners in most communities, and they object very strenuously when you drop a full-service classical station.

"But there are two problems for these guys. There are only 24 hours in a day. And as 24-hour news has become ascendant and dominant, the music is going to feel the squeeze from news and talk. That's just the way it is.

"The other problem is, a lot of these people are living in the past. They see themselves as educators. They go back to that early tradition of educational radio, when the object was to teach people something about the music. They say they're the bearers of the flame—the canon and all that.

"But I'm sorry. That's not the way public radio understands public service today." ♦

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Breeding Insecurity

Israel begins to confront its demographic problem

By Peter Berkowitz

Israeli Jews prefer not to talk about the so-called demographic problem—the challenge of maintaining a Jewish majority in their country while honoring the rights of its large and growing Arab minority. Which is understandable. The very term conjures up illiberal images of a government classifying people by ethnicity, race, or religion. Yet in a state that by self-definition is both democratic and Jewish—but almost 20 percent of whose population are Israeli Arabs whose relation to the majority and to the state is troubled—demography matters. Indeed, national security in the broadest sense—including all threats, nonmilitary as well as military, to a state's political sovereignty and territorial integrity—increasingly compels Israelis to overcome their aversion and face some very sobering facts.

Last December, at the fourth annual Herzliya Conference on national security, Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became the first cabinet-level official to discuss the demographic problem directly in a major public address. He began by stressing that it does not pertain to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza: "We don't have any interest in ruling the Palestinians," he said, "and therefore the demographic problem will not exist in the territories when the Palestinian population switches to Palestinian rule." Inside Israel, however, the problem is one of numbers as well as the quality of civic relations:

> If Arab inhabitants are wonderfully integrated and their numbers increase to 35-40 percent of the total inhabitants of the state, then the Jewish state will have been abolished, and it will have turned into a binational state. If their numbers remain at about 20 percent, as they are today, or fall, but relations are stiff, contentious, and violent, this too will hurt our democratic character. Therefore, we need a policy that balances these two needs. First of all, it is necessary to assure a Jewish majority in Israel. I say this as a liberal, as a democrat, and as a Jewish and Zionist patriot.

The simplicity of Netanyahu's reasoning should not be allowed to obscure the gravity of the implications. This is particularly so at a moment when Arab intellectuals and Arab Knesset members openly contend that the democratic minimum Israel owes its Arab minority is to cease to be a Jewish state. Clearly, both the numerical growth of the Arab minority in Israel and its mounting estrangement from the Jewish majority imperil Israel's very existence as a state that is both democratic and Jewish.

"You have to look at the Jews in the Middle East as a suburb of the West within the third world." This anomaly—that Israel belongs both to the developed Western world and to the developing, non-Western world—is the first lesson Itzhak Ravid drives home in a wide-ranging informal tutorial on the demographic question in Tel Aviv recently. A gruff, no nonsense retired military analyst and former head of the Branch for Operations Research of the Israeli Air Force, Ravid was director of the national security team under prime ministers Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin in 1992-1993. He stresses the impossibility of understanding Israel's population problem without placing it first in a regional—even a global—context.

Consider the West. With its individualist ethic, egalitarian mores, welfare systems, and high-tech health care, the modern West has low birthrates and low infant mortality rates. This results in low rates of natural growth—beneath replacement levels in many parts of Europe. Non-Western nations, meanwhile, have relatively high population growth, correlated with low rates of economic productivity. Some of these countries,

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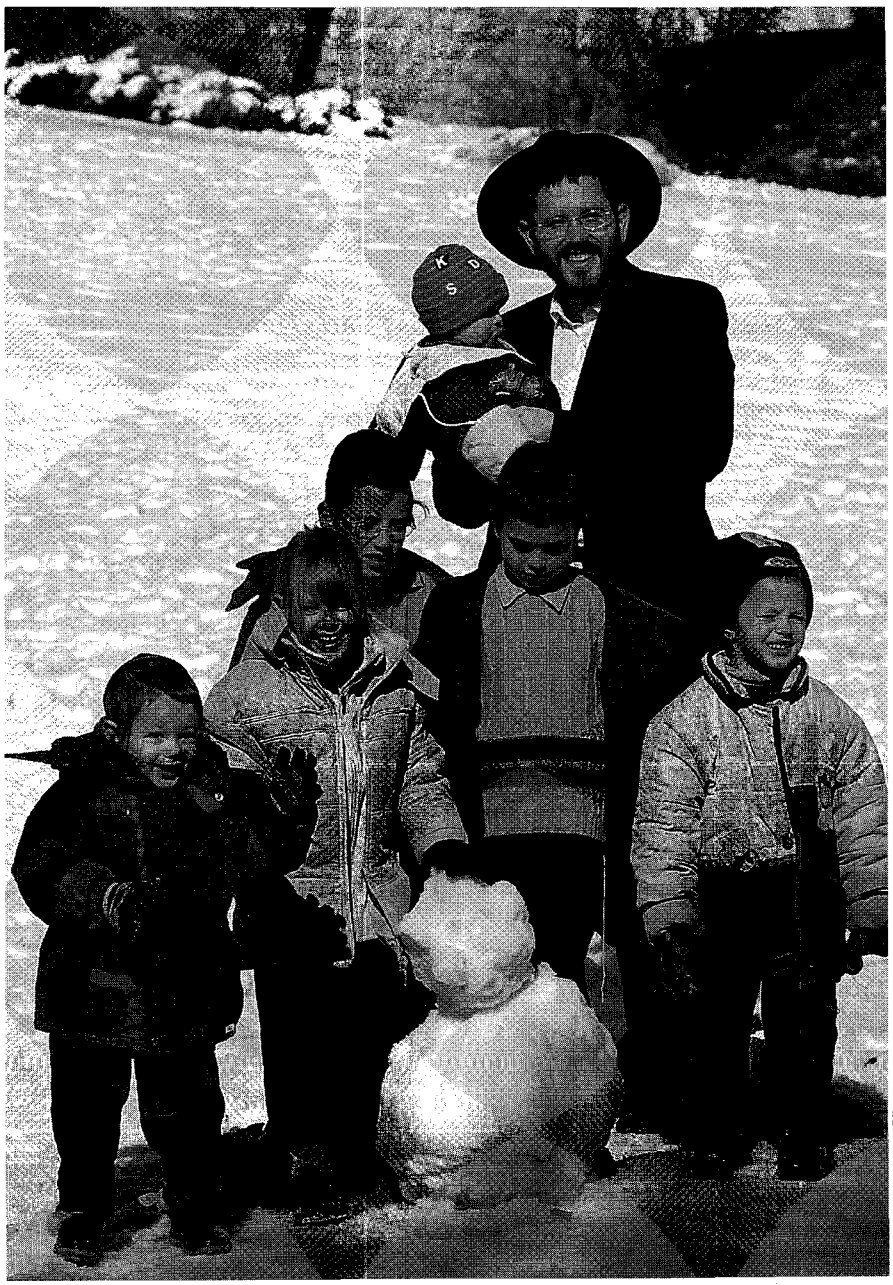
aspiring to economic prosperity, have slowed growth through social policy—China for one. Elsewhere, social policy has failed to lower birthrates—as in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet that region has nothing like the fastest growth in the world, largely because poor health care leaves infant mortality high.

What about the Middle East? The land from Iran in the east to Egypt in the west is home to some of the highest natural rates of population growth anywhere. Part of the explanation is the high value placed on having many children in Muslim teaching and tradition. Yet these very high rates of growth are not evenly distributed across the region. The three biggest countries—Turkey, Iran, and Egypt, which comprise almost 75 percent of its inhabitants—have relatively slow growth. Turkey's population of 68 million is growing at about 1.2 percent. Iran, with 68 million people, is growing at 1.1 percent. And Egypt, with 75 million, is growing at 1.9 percent. These rates of natural growth are much higher than in Europe (Germany is at .04 percent, Italy .1 percent, France .4 percent) or the United States (.9 percent) but far lower than elsewhere in the Middle East. The annual natural growth rate in Syria is 2.5 percent, in Jordan 2.8 percent, in Iraq 2.8 percent, in Saudi Arabia 3.3 percent—and in the Gaza Strip it is among the very highest on Earth, 3.9 percent.



Getty Images / David Silverman

And snowman makes eight: An ultra-orthodox family enjoys a rare Jerusalem snowstorm.

Which brings us to Israel. Among Arab Muslims in Israel, the natural growth rate of 3.5 percent is nearly identical to that of Saudi Arabia. By contrast, the natural growth rate of the dominant majority, Israel's non-ultra-orthodox Jewish citizens, is around 1 percent. These numbers are roughly reversed when it comes to two distinctive minorities. Among the fraction of Israeli Arabs who are Christians, the natural rate of growth is 1.4 percent (and literacy rates and standards of living are high). And among the fraction of Jewish Israelis who are ultra-orthodox, the natural rate of growth is 3.5 percent.

Social policies, Ravid argues, partly account for the dramatic differences. Turkey, Iran, and Egypt have energetic government programs, supported by the United Nations, to reduce the population growth. In Iran, the religious leadership has cooperated with the government, which has presented family size reduction as part of the struggle against American imperialism. The Iranian government has established birth control offices throughout the country, and sends hundreds of mobile centers to rural areas. In cooperation with international organizations, Egypt has undertaken a three-year plan to lower the natural growth rate, and before that, Presi-

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dent Mubarak was making the case to Egyptians that to safeguard their children's opportunities for education and health, parents must take their income into account when planning their families. By contrast, until recently, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan have seen no government campaign to slow the growth of population.

But slowing growth is not always the goal of national population policies. Even in the high-growth Middle East, according to Ravid, two governments actually encourage large families, the governments of Saudi Arabia and—Israel.

They do this through government subsidies that make the marginal cost of another child zero, or even a net gain, to relatively poor families with five children or more. Odd though it may seem, in natural-resource poor Israel as in oil rich Saudi Arabia, the state rewards parents of large families for having larger ones.

In Israel, this policy—which gives parents welfare payments for the fifth child five times greater than the payments they receive for the first child—has had an uneven effect, partly reflecting its peculiar history. Sponsored by ultra-orthodox members of parliament, the subsidies benefit ultra-orthodox families who for religious reasons have large families. It has no direct effect at all on the 70 percent of the Israeli population that is Jewish but not ultra-orthodox, who usually have Western-sized families. But the policy also promotes the very high birthrate of Israeli Arabs, who at the same time enjoy developed-world health care services and thus low infant mortality.

This takes a minute to sink in. "You're telling me that Arab citizens of Israel have sky-high natural rates of growth because of their high developing-world fertility rates, combined with low developed-world infant mortality rates," I ask, "and then the Israeli government pays large families to have more children?"

The tutor's smile tells me I am catching on. He proceeds to explain a curious economic-productivity gap related to these demographics.

Consider GDP per capita. In Israel, it is about $17,000, whereas in Germany, France, and Italy it is a third again as high, and in the United States it is nearly double. Why the discrepancy? In significant measure, Ravid continues, because of the lower per capita productivity among Arab Muslim citizens, who make up some 16 percent of Israel's population, and among ultra-orthodox Jews, another 8 percent of the population. In addition to the high proportion of children in these groups, few Muslim women participate in the labor force, and many ultra-orthodox Jewish men choose long years of religious study rather than productive labor. In short, in Israel almost 75 percent of the population works and produces as in the West, and almost 25 percent of the population works and produces as in the non-Western world. The resulting relatively low overall productivity is perfectly consistent with Israel's perch between the West and the Middle East.

"You don't need politics to explain that," Ravid notes in conclusion. "You don't need the Arab-Jewish conflict. It's quite simple: In Israel you have a heavy burden of communities from the economic point of view who don't participate in the labor force."

His diagnosis complete, Ravid offers no solution to Israel's demographic predicament. Certainly, no substantial new wave of Jewish immigration is in the offing. And inducing the sort of Westernized men and women who make up the bulk of Israel's Jewish majority to have more children is something no modern liberal democracy has found a way to do.

Ravid's analysis does invite the conclusion, however, that curbing the subsidies to very large families would usefully relink family size and cost. Perhaps in combination with policies comparable to those in Israel's largest Muslim neighbors, and with appropriate support for families caught in the transition, this might encourage a family size among Arab citizens more consistent with the developed-world social and economic life available in Israel. In turn, that would increase productivity among Arab citizens, thereby raising family income and further reducing the dependence of Arab citizens on the government. The positive effects on Israel's ultra-orthodox community might be similar. Of course, the extent to which either community would respond to economic incentives in matters that touch the family and religion remains to be seen.

This policy change is not merely an aspiration. In 2003 Netanyahu initiated a reform that severely cut Israel's child allowances starting with the fifth child. Interestingly, these cuts would not have been possible but for a courageous decision made early in 2001 by newly elected Prime Minister Ariel Sharon: By forging a center-right coalition government not dependent on the ultra-orthodox parties (and consequently no longer able to call on them in times of trouble), Sharon broke the decades-old ultra-orthodox veto on social policy. Whether his government's reform will prove enough to cut the Gordian knot of Israel's demographic problem is far from clear, for as Netanyahu pointed out in his Herzliya address, the problem is not only one of numbers, but also of the quality of relations between citizens. ♦

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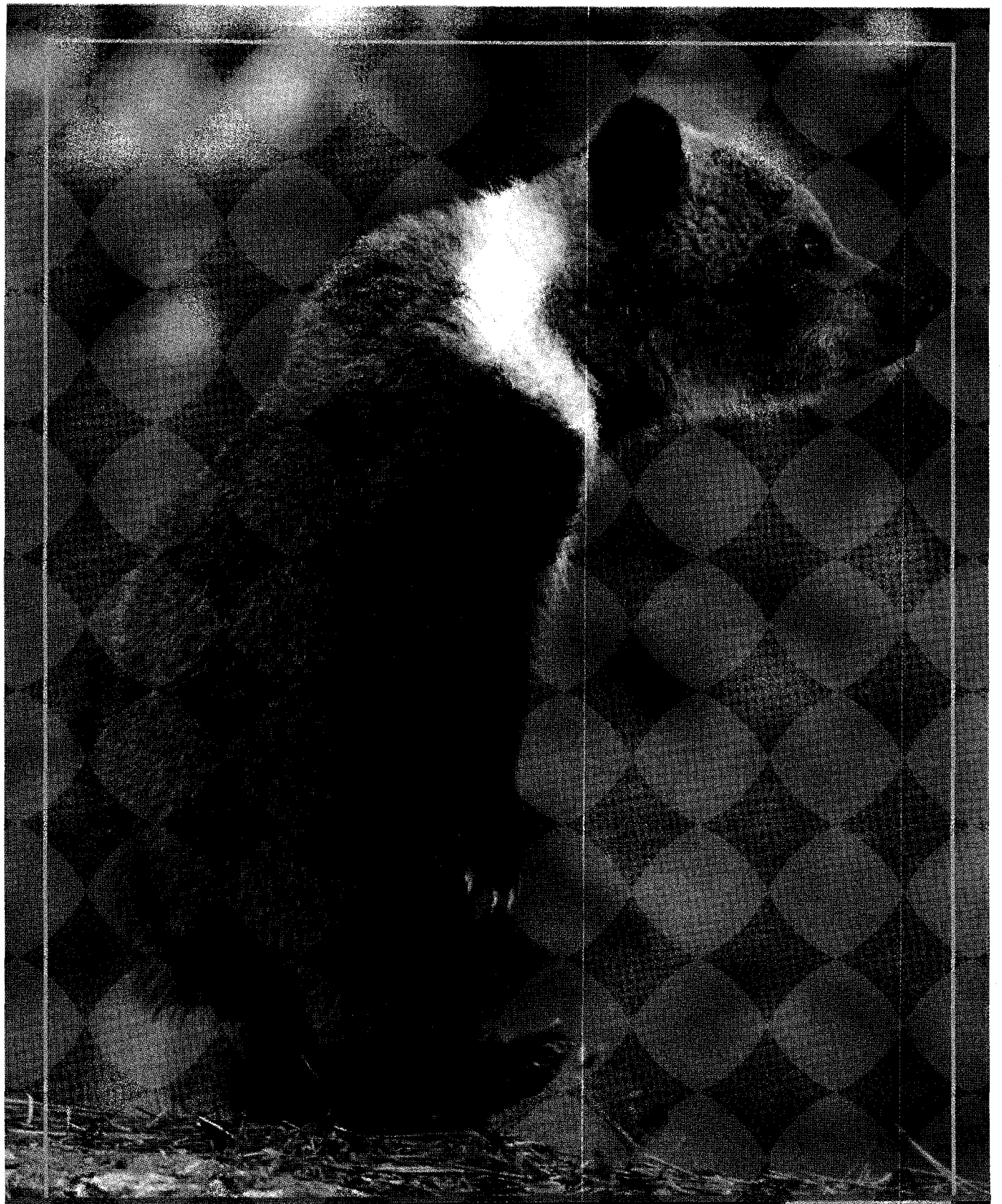

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Ulysses and Us

James Joyce's Bloomsday reaches its centennial

By STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

James Joyce with Sylvia Beach in Paris. Bettmann / CORBIS.

Nelson Rockefeller is alleged to have described the artwork of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, famously difficult classics painted shortly after the Second World War, as "free-enterprise painting." And there, in microcosm, we find the conundrum that has bedeviled certain conservative intellectuals for several generations: What should one think about modernism—particularly high modernism, the works of people like Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and James Joyce, from the first half of the twentieth century? There remains about them an air of the bizarre they seemed to have when they first appeared, and besides, American conservatives tend to be philistine in their judgment of literature and art.

The curious thing is that a great many modernist artists and writers were never political leftists at all. D.H. Lawrence, for example, believed in many peculiar things, but none of them look like radical egalitarianism. And several other modernists who started out as political radicals broke with the Left, particularly in Eastern Europe, where the phenomenon of anti-Communist modernism became markedly visible. In fact, the Communist regimes hated high modernism, precisely because they agreed with Rockefeller in seeing it as an expression of free enterprise in the arts (or "decadence," as they preferred to call it). Karl B. Radek—a Polish Bolshevik who, if he weren't real, only James Joyce could have invented—once having surrendered to Stalinist aesthetics, derided Joyce's *Ulysses* as "a camera focused through a microscope on a worm-infested dunghill."

It didn't do Radek much good, as Stalin had him murdered anyway. But the natural alliance of business entrepreneurship and cultural experiment becomes obvious when we consider the centennial of Bloomsday—the hundredth anniversary of June 16, 1904, the single day in which the action of Joyce's *Ulysses* takes place.

Ulysses recounts twenty-four hours in the life of Dublin, with each chapter paralleling an episode in the *Odyssey*. It begins just outside the city, in a Martello tower, where Stephen Dedalus, the autobiographical hero of Joyce's earlier *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, begins the day with his co-tenants: "Stately, plump Buck Mulligan" and an English Celtophile named Haines. Dedalus proceeds to the village of Dalkey, near Dublin, where he serves as an English instructor in a boys' school. There he is subjected to a tirade against the Jews, which anticipates a major thread in the book: his companionship with Leopold Bloom.

Stephen then wanders along a beach, contemplating the psychic difficulties of his life. Meanwhile, Bloom cooks breakfast for his wife Molly, before proceeding to a butcher shop where he buys a pork kidney and reads, in a newspaper, a plea for support for Zionist colonies in Palestine. Bloom continues across Dublin, meditating on the spectacle before him. After attending the funeral of an acquaintance, Paddy Dignam, Bloom at last meets Dedalus, in the office of the *Freeman's Journal*.

A writer in Washington, Stephen Schwartz is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Joyce's Dublin

Sean Sexton / CORBIS

Further internal monologues are followed by Stephen Dedalus's visit to the National Library in Dublin. Bloom and Dedalus continue to wander across the city. Bloom saunters along the same beach where Dedalus had previously walked, and the sight of a woman's bare legs set him off in sexual fantasy. Visiting a woman friend in labor at a hospital, Bloom again meets Dedalus—and Dedalus, followed by Bloom, enters the surrealistic landscape of a brothel street, "Nighttown," where the pair begin a long exchange of observations about themselves and the world. They end at Bloom's house, where they continue their dialogue. At last, Stephen leaves, and Bloom goes to bed. At the close of the novel, Molly Bloom lies in bed, thinking—in the great example of Joyce's technique of interior monologue—of her life and her husband. The novel reaches, in its famous concluding line, into Molly's mind for her sleepy affirmation of life, "Yes I said yes I will Yes."

Leopold Bloom—the half-Jew of Dublin, his father born in the Hungarian town of Szombathely with the name Rudolf Virag ("virag" is the Hungarian word for "flower")—may be the greatest literary creation of modern times. Certainly *Ulysses* is the greatest novel of modern times: the English language's equivalent of *Don Quixote*. It must be stipulated that Leopold Bloom is not an exemplary descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for his hands are frequently placed in proximity to pork, almost no kosher food or practice is mentioned in the narrative, and his knowledge and practice of Judaism as a faith are fragmentary at best. His father is said to have converted to Protestantism, and to have married a woman who, if not Catholic, as suggested in the "Circe" chapter of *Ulysses*, was at the least a Christian. Bloom himself is said to have been baptized three times, and is married to a non-Jewish woman. (Although the name of Molly Bloom's mother, Lunita Laredo, and her place of birth, Gibralter, both suggest a possible Sephardic Jewish connection.) Still, Bloom is mostly a Jew as defined by his gentile neighbors and by his refusal to renounce his background.

Even as such, Bloom as Ulysses—as Odysseus, the wanderer—represents in Joyce's work a nation driven into exile. And it is an exile in which, in a worldwide diaspora, the Irish have joined the Jews. In the "Cyclops" chapter of *Ulysses*, Bloom is baited by a nationalist loudmouth who asks him insolently, "What is your nation if I may ask?" Bloom answers humbly: "Ireland.... I was born here. Ireland." Later, in the long recounting of dialogues between Bloom and Dedalus near the book's passionate conclusion, similarities between the Gaelic and Hebrew languages are enumerated, including "their dispersal, persecution, survival, and revival," and comprising an equation of Zionism with the struggle for Irish political rights.

Of course, the original Odysseus was a Greek, and the Greeks also have a diaspora, which has led some—like the Grecophile Christopher Hitchens in *Vanity Fair*—to overemphasize the Hellenic element in *Ulysses*. In truth, despite Dedalus's inventive Greek name, there's little Greek about Dedalus or Bloom. Even the title of the book borrows the Latin form of the name of Homer's hero, not the Greek. James Joyce was one of the great polyglot polymaths of literature, and he had fled from what he felt was Dublin's insular smugness to compose *Ulysses* in Trieste, which was itself in those days one of the great polyglot cities in the world. But despite his skill with languages, his ancient Greek was never good, and the deep soundings he makes of the roots of Western civilization are far more often based on Latin sources than Greek—which may be why they are more often theological than philosophical.

The Irish are inordinately fond of jokes and puns, especially if they are esoteric and thus known only to a few, and *Ulysses* is full of teasing references, hints, and gestures. The action in *Ulysses*, for instance, transpires on the very June 16, 1904, when Joyce and his wife Nora Barnacle had their first date, a beach promenade to which she acceded after earlier standing him up. And yet there is no mention whatever of the encounter, or the couple, even disguised, in the book's pages. It is as if the whole book were, secretly, a love letter to Nora, as well as to the English language, and, finally, to life.

Ulysses may be considered a homage to a little-understood phenomenon I would call "romantic imprinting," in which a particular love retains an extraordinary hold on an individual throughout that person's life. Joyce often expressed his disdain for Dublin, but *Ulysses* is a paean to memory, and the author ends up celebrating Dublin in a marvelously traditionalist way. Joyce is even a kind of literary Burkean, for he is uninterested in the pathos of the city's poverty, or, except in the rhetoric of the pub, in the rumblings of its revolutionaries, although references to Irish nationalism saturate the book. What Joyce really adores is the city's archaic character.

Indeed, *Ulysses* aims to be the supreme incarnation of the permanency of human collective memory in the habits of human existence—of correspondences between past and present, and between the lives of all human beings, from the heroic age to the present. Bloom's escape from the Judeophobic "citizen" reenacts

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Odysseus' escape from the rage of Cyclops, the one-eyed monster, an appropriate symbol of racial and religious prejudice. "It's no use. . . . Force, hatred, history, all that," Bloom decides. "That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life. . . . Love. . . . I mean the opposite of hatred."

But *Ulysses* transmutes the events of Homer's *Odyssey* into the common speech of the Dublin Joyce knew. It was English as the language had never been spoken before, and perhaps never will be again: an English of comedy, depth, pathos, and blarney. The reader feels an almost physical desire, a linguistic lust, to have heard the voices recorded in its pages. Joyce did not simply use language; he lived within language, and *Ulysses* is truly a poem in prose. There is no other body of fiction, in any language, fully comparable to James Joyce's.

For the novel's use of language alone we should all celebrate the hundredth Bloomsday this June 16. Becoming a writer in the English-speaking world without knowing *Ulysses* now seems impossible, and the book's influences are found everywhere—even in politics, as when Stephen Dedalus makes his famous comment, "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake," which could apply to millions today.

Those who aim to be genuinely literate should at least understand the sense of language as a multidimensional fact that led Joyce to succeed *Ulysses* with the considerably more difficult *Finnegans Wake*, a book composed in "dream language." The contemporary Irish writer Roddy Doyle early this year declared in a moment of ill-advised bluster, from which he quickly retreated, "I only read three pages of *Finnegans Wake* and it was a tragic waste of time." That is a bit like hearing that an aspiring artist looked at one painting of Picasso, with the same result.

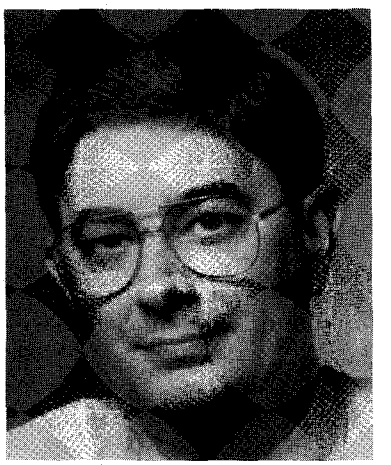
There was a time when such mockery was prevalent among cultural conservatives; but that era should, by now, have passed by. Even Joyce's subtle prescience—particularly about the causes of national prejudice and brutality in the century we have left—is enough to make *Ulysses* worth our attention. So, too, Joyce's wisdom about the intellectual, cultural, and literary traditions of Western civilization makes the book worth revisiting this year. And then there's the fact that *Ulysses* is such a comic story: bawdy, raucous, uncontrolled. A lot like real life, as it happens. Never was there a book like *Ulysses*. James Joyce took the modernist novel and forged it into the great story of human beings as they are: mockable and praiseworthy, pathetic and noble, foolish and wise, beastly and angelic—and very, very funny. ♦

The Spirit in Letters

George Weigel writes epistles to a young Catholic.

BY EVE TUSHNET

George Weigel, in agreeing to write *Letters to a Young Catholic*, took on the unenviable task of writing a thin book about a very thick subject. "Letters to a Young . . ." is a Basic Books series that includes Dinesh D'Souza's *Letters to a Young Conservative* and Christopher Hitchens's *Letters to a Young Contrarian*—but none of the other books has tackled anything even approaching the size and scope of the Catholic Church. There is probably a reason for that. And rather than limit himself to one aspect or theme of Catholicism's millennia-old and globe-spanning history, Weigel covers everything from Mary to the apostolic succession to sexual ethics.



Letters to a Young Catholic
The Art of Mentoring
by George Weigel
Basic, 251 pp., $22.50

Weigel is best known as the author of the enormous and definitive biography of Pope John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*, and he has become in recent years the most visible Catholic commentator in America with such books as *The Courage to Be Catholic* and *The Truth of Catholicism*. Now, in *Letters to a Young Catholic*, Weigel offers provocative statements. Unfortunately, the small structure of the books in the series gives him little space to fill in the finer features of the argument. He cites, for example, Flannery O'Connor's famous statement on the Eucharist, "Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it." On its face, this is a curious dismissal of symbolism—but an explanation of why so many Catholics respond fervently to O'Connor's words would require a full-length book on the strongly visceral sense Catholics have of the Incarnation and physicality. Weigel is right to draw the point: "Stuff counts. I count. You count. It all counts." But the jump to this conclusion is too quick and too abstract.

Eve Tushnet is a freelance journalist and editor of www.marriagedebate.com.

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Similarly, Weigel describes the gay-rights movement as "perhaps the most potent example" of "the 'gnostic imagination' in our culture today," and he asserts that cutting-edge biotechnology is an attempt to "remanufacture the human condition" that will require "massive coercion." Both of these positions are startling, intriguing, and defensible. They are the sort of insights that attract people to the Catholic Church. They are the sort of countercultural, philosophically rich assessments that our culture needs. But both of them require much more than the few short paragraphs they can receive in this sort of book.

An interesting feature of *Letters to a Young Catholic* is the way Weigel writes the book as a series of actual letters from different places that have shaped his Catholic imagination. This approach allows him to hop from subject to subject; it also emphasizes that Catholicism is as vast as the globe, but as intimate as your local parish. The locations chosen are often deeply personal, so a strong sense of Weigel's own history comes through. Weigel is also adept at describing the attractions of Gothic architecture—the way it is both majestic and busy, both awe-inspiring and familiar—and the letters he writes from Poland vividly convey the love of he has for Polish Catholicism and for John Paul II.

Within one letter, Weigel leaps from a discussion of Charles and Julia's affair in *Brideshead Revisited* to a description of St. Thomas More's life and martyrdom. The connection at first seems obscure. But Weigel subtly draws out the similarities between the showy, obvious martyrdom of the saint and the hidden, conflicted decisions of Waugh's characters. This comparison makes the need for sacrifice in every life immediate and fresh, connecting More's grand-scale suffering to the moments we are all called to choose God or self.

Many passages are written from a nostalgic perspective that actual young Catholics will likely find alien, and Weigel's background in traditional Catholicism may hide from him one of the biggest problems facing "cradle Catholics" today. Weigel's loving memories of the parochial Catholicism of his youth make it impossible for him to talk about the problem ethnicity has become for the church in America. John Kerry's Communion photo-ops are only the most obvious examples of the problem: Catholicism is viewed as an ethnic identity, a human social network rather than a divine institution malleable only by God. Almost all of this book could have been written as letters to a young Catholic from 1973; the main exception is the section on John Paul II.

Some young Catholics, or young people considering Catholicism, might need an introduction to basic practices. Others might need poetry, novels, or histories of architecture. Others might need lives of the saints or explanations of Catholic ethics. *Letters to a Young Catholic* incorporates all these elements, but Weigel has not been allotted the space he would need for such an encyclopedic endeavor. Instead, we get shorthand, a series of impressions and thesis statements. If one is not St. Paul, it is very hard to write a book that is all things to all people. ♦

Jail House Blues

America's immigration prisons are a scandal—but writing bad books is no way to fix them. **BY ELI LEHRER**

On any given day, the United States government holds about 20,000 men and women in immigration detention; 200,000 pass through the system each year. Most are illegal aliens awaiting deportation, some are asylum seekers unable to post bond, and a few are stateless deportees refused entry by both the United States and their countries of birth.

American Gulag
Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons
by Mark Dow
University of California Press, 413 pp., $27.50

Mark Dow's *American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons* explores the shadowy world of detained immigrants. Dow's work has the mark of an important book: It sheds light on some terribly run facilities, includes lots of fine-grained detail, and raises a bevy of interesting questions about a notoriously unresponsive government agency. The book, Dow says, is an attempt to record "the system of immigration detention itself, including the widespread mistreatment of the prisoners inside that system." Unfortunately, Dow overstates his case so much that it's difficult to take *American Gulag* seriously.

In fourteen chapters Dow, a freelance writer who briefly taught at a Miami immigration detention center, endeavors to expose the nation's immigration enforcers (now an agency called "Immigration and Customs Enforcement") as a group of brutal and arbitrary thugs who enjoy humiliating detainees. Dow goes inside the federal facilities, the detention centers outsourced to something called "the GEO group," and state facilities that receive federal payments for housing immigrants. He talks to detainees, guards, administrators, and his fellow journalists. His only discernible intellectual influence appears to be French postmodernist Michel Foucault (who believed that prison, not crime, creates criminals). Dow, indeed, gives no evidence of having read anything on modern prison management in the United States.

Eli Lehrer is associate editor of the American Enterprise *and a fellow of the Sagamore Institute.*

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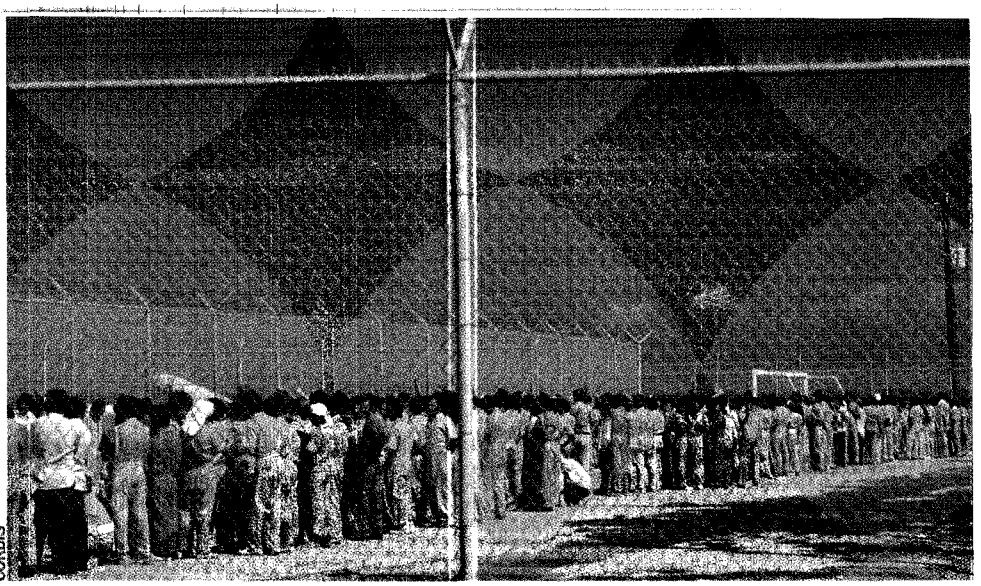
Still, Dow's Stakhanovite research proves that the United States is doing a very bad job at jail keeping. Guards, particularly at Miami's Krome detention center, frequently abuse detainees verbally and sometimes physically. Many state prisons that house inmates under contract do an equally poor job. Immigration officials move detainees around the country when they complain or talk to the media. Medical care in immigration detention is poor, entertainments rare, and conditions Spartan. Many men and women who have served out criminal sentences or, in rare cases, done nothing wrong, can spend months in prison-like conditions while awaiting deportation.

This is a scandal, and something must be done. But Dow is not much help in bringing this to public notice, for he consistently goes past truth to the land of indignant exaggeration. If a reader takes Dow at his word that he doesn't want to draw an analogy with the "purpose, scale, or often fatal brutality of the Soviet gulag," then why does he include the word in his book's title? Why does he repeatedly refer to the detention system as a "gulag"? And why does he litter the book with quotations from Russian gulag writers like Joseph Brodsky? It's offensive to compare a system that killed 4.5 million people to one that's usually just unpleasant.

Even when Dow uncovers something troubling, he blows it out of proportion. Early in the book, for example, he relates the second-hand story of an unnamed Somali man handcuffed and locked in a parked car for a half hour in the midday sun. The action, Dow's source says, stems from a supervisor's desire to stop other Somalis from applying for asylum. Dow, however, insists on finding a racial angle to the story: He refers to the event as a "nigger roast," even though there's no evidence that anyone involved used a racist slur or, for that matter, acted out of racist impulse. When negligence and poor management are uncovered, Dow asserts that jailers engaged in a deliberate attempt to make life miserable for inmates.

Nearly all of the most horrifying stories in *American Gulag* come to Dow second or thirdhand. None of the people he interviews suffered sexual abuse at the hands of guards or inmates. A few of his suspects were painfully restrained after attacking a guard or threatening suicide, and a few had tussles with guards, but none of them faced gratuitous beatings. Nobody Dow talks to has a story of being denied medical care, although a few complain about inadequate psychological services and overuse of behavior-modifying drugs. These two problems exist in nearly every American house of detention. Inmate-on-inmate rape—which victimizes about one in ten male inmates in American prisons—gets mentioned only in one account that comes to Dow fourthhand. Immigration detention is horrible, but, taking Dow's evidence at face value, conditions in most facilities are probably better than those in the bottom 15 percent of America's state prisons.

Dow's own reporting occasionally makes an inadvertent case that some of the people sitting in immigration detention probably belong there. Mohammad Bachir, to whom Dow gives more ink than anyone else, is typical. Bachir, born in a refugee camp in southern Lebanon, was a legal permanent resident in the United States for most of his life but lost his status following a conviction for kidnapping and stalking. (Even Dow admits these are "seemingly good" reasons for detention.) He served his sentence and then landed in immigration detention while awaiting deportation. While in detention, he staged a number of hunger strikes, gave media interviews, and proved effective at getting other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Above: Illegal aliens in Texas. Below: An immigration prisoner in New York.

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inmates to join his cause. Partly in retaliation and partly because his behavior made prisons so difficult to run, immigration officials transferred him all over the country and subjected him to a variety of indignities. Eventually, immigration officials released him and within a few months he began to stalk his ex-wife again. The authorities detained him again but, at wits end, eventually let him back out. Dow sees no problem with this.

Meanwhile, Bogdan Lawniczek, a Polish-born man who lost his legal status in both America and Poland following a murder conviction, also gets sympathetic treatment. Poland won't take him and the United States doesn't want him—and Dow implies that it is an injustice the authorities will not release Lawniczek to Afghanistan so he can join up with a friend who is (no joke) connected to the Taliban.

Dow relates these men's run-ins with jailhouse authorities in excruciating detail but dismisses their crimes with a few scattered words. While both served their sentences in prison before being detained, holding them and trying to deport them hardly seems an injustice: Both are convicted criminals who were eligible for citizenship before their crimes and chose not to apply.

Some of Dow's charges against the immigration authorities are red herrings. He complains repeatedly, for example, about the lack of educational programs in INS detention facilities. Most people in these facilities, however, are there for just a few days before deportation or release and don't have time for educational programs. Dow also criticizes indefinite immigration detention at great length. While there is no easy solution for stateless criminal aliens, holding them indefinitely without trial seems severe and undemocratic. For this reason, the Supreme Court struck down the practice in 2001. Except for a few Mariel Cubans (dangerous criminals Castro dumped in the United States), it's no longer an option for America's civil-immigration authorities. Because it would detract from his narrative, Dow mentions the court decision in only a few brief paragraphs near the end of his book.

In sum, Dow documents a real problem at great length but makes no concrete suggestions for reform. Like its precursors, Immigration and Customs Enforcement does a terrible job running detention facilities. This does not mean, however, that the practice of immigration detention is inherently unjust: Sovereign nations should be able to decide who can come in. Immigration detention needs to be humane and accountable. Dow has shone a lot of light into a seldom-visited corner of the American prison system, but *American Gulag* is so shrill and cynical that it is unlikely to draw much attention. ♦

The Butler Did It

Why murder belongs in the stately homes of England.

BY S.T. KARNICK

The traditional puzzle mystery—the old-fashioned whodunit—has a long history in both the United States and Great Britain (and a less prominent but significant one in Europe and the rest of the world). The Sherlock Holmes stories are the earliest such tales that most people know about, but the first true mystery stories, those written by Poe in the 1840s, were in the puzzle style. The first important American mystery novelist, Anna Katharine Green, wrote in what is now the traditional puzzle form in books like *The Leavenworth Case* of 1878, as did Wilkie Collins in his justly renowned early mystery novel *The Moonstone* in 1868. Even Charles Dickens tried his hand at the form (very successfully) in his last, unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.*

The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks
by James Anderson
Poisoned Pen, 320 pp., $24.95

But the golden age of the whodunit was the period between the two world wars in England and the United States. Authors such as Agatha Christie, John Dickson Carr, Ellery Queen, Dorothy L. Sayers, H.C. Bailey, Rex Stout, Ngaio Marsh, and many others of similar ability were in their prime then, and every year brought dozens of top-level puzzle mysteries. And yet, for some not entirely explicable reason, most new writers and their publishers decided after the war that murder was not a cheery business, and the puzzles faded from view, replaced by more hardboiled, explicitly violent and sexy fare.

Of course, the traditional mystery didn't entirely disappear. The continuing popularity of the form is demonstrated by today's countless, steady-selling—and typically ghastly—cozy novel series (featuring bed-and-breakfast owners, feisty grannies, or cats as the detectives). And something like a revival has been quietly happening in recent decades, with P.D. James, Reginald Hill, Elizabeth Peters, Peter Lovesey, and Tony Hillerman bringing new life to the form by creating real novels that happen to have a mystery at the center.

Unlike those more overtly ambitious writers, the British author James Anderson has gone traditional all the way, actually setting his three Inspector Wilkins mystery novels directly in the fictional past of the 1930s English countryside. Starting with *The Affair of the Bloodstained Egg Cosy* in 1975 and continuing to his current release, *The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks*, Anderson's traditional-style puzzle novels have updated the classic British country house mystery by the unusual strategy of being highly faithful to their source.

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Each volume includes, for example, that essential element of all great traditional mysteries: a map, in this case a floor plan of Alderley, Lord and Lady Burford's beautiful rural English home built in the seventeenth century. Each of the books takes place on this elegant estate, which could be the setting for a frothy P.G. Wodehouse farce were it not for the occasional homicide.

Anderson continually shows a fondness for genre conventions while carefully creating new variations on the old traditions. Each book, for example, has a highly provocative opening, as when a woman hisses "You murdering fiend!" at the commencement of *The Affair of the Mutilated Mink* (1981), and the tension is promptly deflated to comic effect. The author then settles down to several chapters of real novel writing, exploring the various characters' personal situations, which ultimately lead up to the murder a good way through the book.

Like Ngaio Marsh—and unlike most current-day crime writers—Anderson is in no hurry to get to the actual killing. That is all to the good, for the comedy of manners allows the reader to get to know the characters and situations well, while enjoying some genial, Wodehousian satire on human nature.

Pictures: CORBIS.

The characters are just the sorts one might expect to find in an Agatha Christie book: the movie star, the plutocrat, the journalist, the diplomat, the wealthy layabout, the politician, the lawyer, the secretary, the termagant, the spunky young female, and so on. The situations are likewise familiar: a surprising provision in a will, social snobbery, blackmail, espionage, burglary, adultery, abandonment, suicide, cocktail parties, impersonations, verbal quarrels, fistfights, and the like. The characters are locked in the house at night, with a well-designed burglar alarm eliminating outsiders as possible suspects. The murders are done through simple, conventional means such as shooting and strangling.

In each volume, Anderson uses at least one amateur detective in friendly competition with Inspector Wilkins, and both the nonprofessional and the policeman prove quite effective in solving the case. Wilkins is likable, humble, and shrewd. One gets the impression that Wilkins truly does believe that he is out of his depth in investigating these country-house killings, as he asserts. It is also clear, however, that his very ignorance of the customs of the rich works to his advantage by freeing him from assumptions that would tend to lead him in the wrong direction.

The author lays out clues and red herrings in the classical tradition—a pair of antique dueling pistols, a potted plant, a pair of wire-cutters, and of course the items mentioned in the books' titles. The narrative tone is true to the time in which the stories are set: delight in the thrill of the chase, leavened by an awareness of the seriousness of the

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situation. In another bow to tradition, Anderson alludes directly to Christie and Sayers in the names of two important characters in *The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks*, and the solution to the mystery includes a morally sophisticated final twist involving a novel variation on Christie's use of the "least likely suspect" gambit. The book also includes an explicit but tastefully brief assertion of the author's Christian beliefs, through a conversation between two characters.

The best genre books walk a fine line between convention and innovation, and a good deal of Anderson's appeal is in having achieved the right amount of each. He openly makes light of genre conventions, in fact, to very good effect. For example, in *The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks* he has Inspector Wilkins dismiss the household staff as suspects by saying, "I have never come across a country house case in which any of the servants was guilty." Wilkins goes on to note that a spate of such cases had occurred in the United States some years ago, "but that trend is long past." (He also refers to Christie's fictional detective Hercule Poirot as a living contemporary.)

Anderson further makes *The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks* relevant to today's readers by mocking current-day political correctness. A young man sheepishly admits to the girl he loves, "Fact is, that, well—I'm a conservative. . . . Oh, I don't mean I'm a member of the party, or anything like that. But I do vote for them. Well, I did once. Well, last time. Well, the only time I've voted, actually." Her response: "I think it's very brave of you to tell me." The slight anachronism is funny and pointed: Conservatism has replaced communism as the great political bugaboo.

The conclusion to *The Affair of the 39 Cufflinks* draws a highly interesting and useful observation about moral culpability, as Wilkins considers a further, final twist in the case. Greatly to his credit, the author does not present these innovations as necessary improvements on a fusty, decaying genre but instead as more openly self-conscious renderings of things that were implicit but perfectly visible in the originals, for those who chose to see them. Anderson does not present himself as in any way more sophisticated than Christie, Sayers, and Queen. He merely shows himself cognizant of the expectations of contemporary readers. That is what good genre fiction always does. ♦

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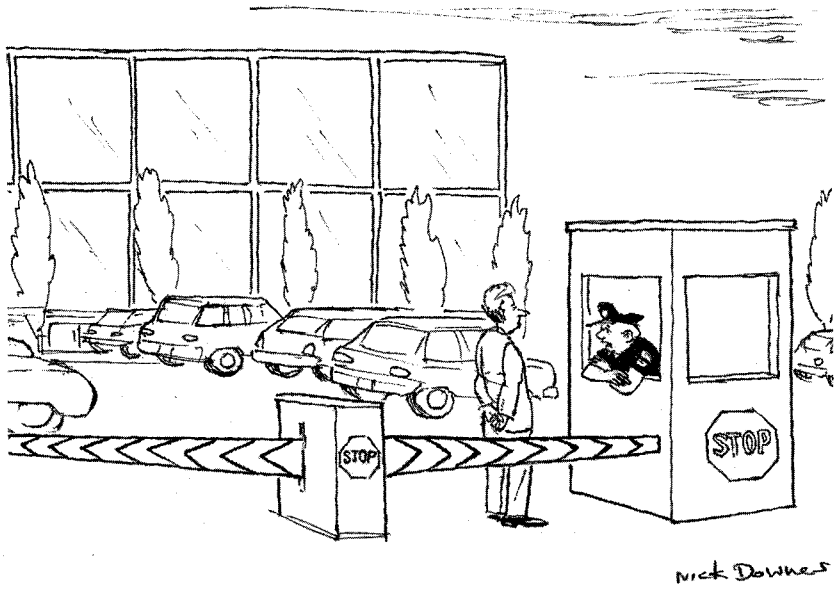

"I went to a really crummy law school."

Books in Brief

***Myself and Strangers: A Memoir of Apprenticeship* by John Graves (Knopf, 235 pp., $24).** In a quiet way this memoir is very touching—and very American as well. John Graves, its author, is eighty-four. In going through old journals he'd kept from the late 1940s into the 1960s, prior to committing them to the flames in a general clearing away of a lifetime, he began to feel maybe there was something he could possibly salvage.

Happily he did. The book covers the years that took him from his Texas home to being wounded on a small Pacific atoll as a Marine Corps captain in the Second World War to an expatriate existence, much of it lived in Spain, as he tried to discover whether he had the stuff of a writer in him or not. Many times he quotes from those journals, reflecting on what "Young John" had experienced, adding comments from "Old John," a wiser but certainly not sentimental fellow. He passes along reactions to his reading—he did a lot of reading then, and occasionally adds his reflections of today—"George Sessions Perry, *Hold Autumn in Your Hand*. It is a good piece of work, and causes me no envy because Texas is not my territory any more." He follows with "[Old John: This was a *very* major misapprehension, for in the long run Texas was the main territory I did have.]"

Graves has some fairly acute thoughts about Americans when off their native soil: "The resentful dislike which many Americans abroad feel toward other Americans for being there too, and which at bottom is probably a nervousness about *being* American." He continues: "That season in Madrid I was alone a great deal, mainly by choice. It is one of the better cities I have known to be alone in, not so big that loneliness surrounds you and piles up as it can in New York, nor so active and vibrating that the mere fact of being by yourself amid so much movement and companionship cuts you, as in Paris, like a knife."

If Graves did his share of hanging out in cafés and drinking with fellow Americans or Englishmen, he also savored strong and close friendships with Spaniards, hunting, fishing, and sailing with them. He's clearly aware of all the writing done by fellow Americans over the years on the topic of café-life abroad. He mentions Hemingway and Fitzgerald but scarcely in any burst of maudlin nostalgia. And yes there were women as well, about whom he generally maintains the discreet gallantry of his southern upbringing.

Off and on through those years abroad, Graves was slogging away at a novel, *A Speckled Horse*, interspersed with producing short stories (his very first accepted by the *New Yorker*) and articles for the likes of *Holiday* and *Colliers*. But when finally the novel was finished and sent off to his agent, a letter came back—"long, rather horrified." And Graves reread his manuscript and decided "it still wasn't as good as I had wanted it to be, and I had done all I could with it."

He went back to Texas, writing stories gleaned from browsing through the Southwestern Collection of the old Carnegie library downtown in Fort Worth. "I was where I belonged." This led to the writing of *Goodbye to a River*, and "its rightness wiped out my disappointment over the failure of *A Speckled Horse*, which I could now see as the last, deck-clearing stage of an apprenticeship lasting more than a decade and experienced far from home, during which I had slowly developed a degree of objectivity in regard to who I was and how to handle language."

It is from Gertrude Stein, a woman who knew something about writers and living abroad, that Graves chose his title: "I write for myself and strangers." He adds with typical modesty, "Me too, at least when I'm writing honestly." *Myself and Strangers* is an altogether commendable picture of a time and of a man who proved singularly American.

—*Cynthia Grenier*

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Front-page news in the New York Times, June 2, 2004

Not a Parody

A Life as a Live! Nude! Girl! Has a Few Strings Attached

By SARAH KERSHAW

AMERICAN DREAMERS

The Lure of Las Vegas

4. Trixie

LAS VEGAS — Strippers work three shifts at the Palomino Club: the 5, the 8 and the 10 p.m.

New girls tend to work the 5, which means they sometimes sit around an empty club for hours, playing video games, buying themselves $11 whiskeys or $8 rum and Cokes, clicking up to the stage in high heels for a two-song show and getting naked for nobody but the D.J., a few other lonely strippers and their own reflections on the mirrored walls.

The best shift is the 8. The club might be filling up by then, promising dancers the most cash for the least time spent crawling across the stage, grabbing bills slipped into cleavage and G-strings, swinging around a pole or writhing in someone's lap for $40 a dance in a dark room behind the bar.

Trixie works the 8. It's a seniority thing, and Trixie, a dancer at the Palomino for two years now, is the queen of her house, as she likes to say. That means, for one thing, that she is in good standing with the club's owner, a former cop from California known to the dancers as Mr. H. That kind of protection is no small thing in the potentially treacherous Las Vegas stripping world. It also means that so far Trixie has figured out how to survive, even thrive, as a stripper here.

Trixie is her stage name. To customers who demand to know her real name before they lay down a tip, she's Jennifer. But her real name is Stephanie — Stephanie Vowell, 32, a small-town Midwesterner, a self-described "big fake blonde" who stands 6-foot-3 in her 7½-inch heels with a fake blond ponytail, fake eyelashes, fake green eyes, a fake tan and fake breasts.

Being big and fake and loud is Trixie's way of standing out in Las Vegas, where it seems a million other girls do what she does.

"If you're going to work in Vegas, you have to have something that will set you apart from everyone else," she said one night at the Palomino. She fidgeted with the strap on her white heels, describing a painful condition she calls "stripper foot." "These are not happy shoes at all," she said. "But they do wonders for you. I like to be able to stand up and look a man in the eye when I'm talking business. In these shoes, they see me above everybody else."

Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Stephanie Vowell at the Palomino Club, where she is Trixie.

Dancers like Trixie, who grew up in a small cornfield of a town with no stoplights in Illinois and moved here from Naples, Fla.,

Continued on Page A18

the weekly Standard

JUNE 14, 2004

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Lessons of Abu Ghraib

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During my years covering the Pentagon I followed enough military investigations designed to cover up incompetence, malfeasance, and downright stupidity to turn even the most credulous reporter into a skeptic. Whether it was the downing of an Iranian airbus, raunchy behavior at a Tailhook convention, or a fatal explosion aboard an antique battleship, the first mandate of investigative panels was always to protect the reputation of the service and the "good old boys" who ran it.

Not so the military's investigation into the sordid goings on at Abu Ghraib prison. Here the area command reacted swiftly to soldier Joseph Darby's charges of torture and abuse. Major General Antonio Taguba put the blame squarely where it belonged, on senior planners and commanders responsible for dealing with Iraqi detainees. From Taguba there were no mind-numbing homilies about the small handful of bad soldiers obscuring the good work of many. Here the problem was "systemic." It went to the core of any military operation—training, discipline, and leadership. Or, to put the matter bluntly, **the soldiers supervising thousands of Iraqi prisoners were ill-prepared for the task and permitted to rampage through the prison like a band of vigilantes while senior intelligence officials—uniformed and civilian—may well have egged them on.** Unit commanders were nowhere in sight.

And why did U.S. security forces find themselves in this predicament? For the same reason U.S. combat forces have suffered opposition so fierce that for a period military commanders in Iraq openly courted Baathist Republican Guard personnel and fanatics serving in the militia of radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. And for the same reason that they are currently permitting any number of private militias to flourish. Because there simply have not been enough forces to handle the situation that has actually developed on the ground—as opposed to the best-case scenarios for which top Pentagon strategists had prepared.

There was, of course, no harm in believing that U.S. troops with their state-of-the-art weaponry would make short work of Iraqi forces, that they would be welcomed as liberators by long-oppressed Iraqis, that they would find the thirst for democracy acute in this acrid authoritarian environment, and that democracy and a market economy would bring all but the most extreme into the fold. No harm, that is, so long as your planning accommodates less-optimal developments.

The Pentagon's planning failure was evident from the first moments of the occupation as ferocious mobs rampaged through Baghdad and other cities while undermanned U.S. forces watched on the sidelines. In the weeks and months to follow, the rebels struck infrastructure targets, seized massive arms caches, and demolished hotels, marketplaces, and UN headquarters while increasingly bold and sophisticated resistance fighters took a savage toll of American lives.

All this has served to increase the stakes in Iraq to the point where **even most prewar doves now recognize that a defeat there will have a catastrophic effect on both the war against terrorism and U.S. interests in the Middle East.** In an ironic, almost bizarre way, the Pentagon's own planning failures have given it a final window of opportunity to get things right, to move the personnel and equipment to Iraq needed to do the job on the battlefield, in the political community, and, yes, even in the prisons. What is needed is fortitude, not fig leafs. Generations to come will pay the price of failure.

—Robert Zelnick

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

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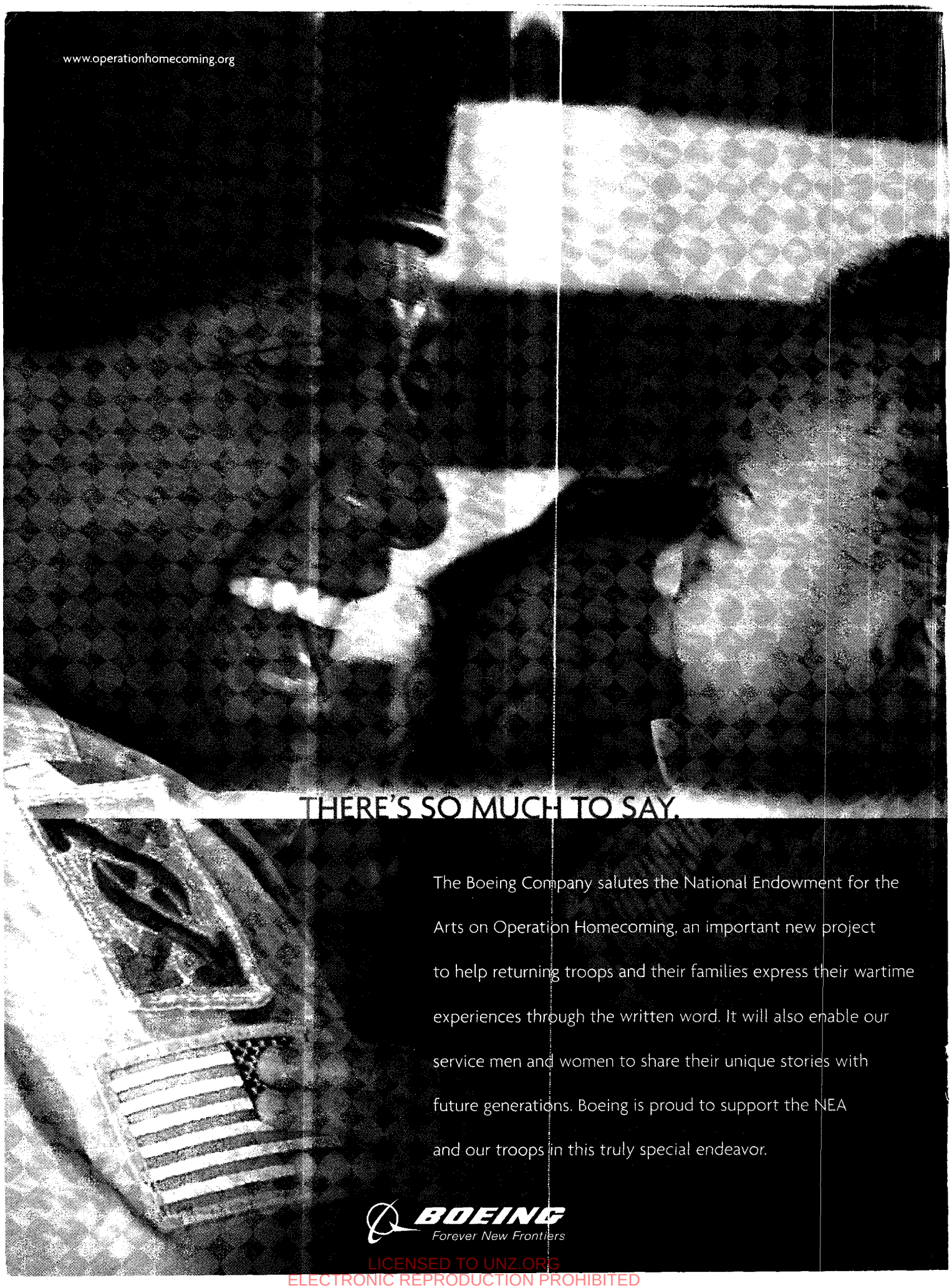

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